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FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE



SIR THEODORE BROUGHTON;

OR,

LAUREL WATER.

BY

G. P. R. JAMES.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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SIR THEODORE BROUGHTON;

OR,

LAUREL WATER.

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN DONOVAN was seated in an inn at Dover, waiting for the sailing of the ship or packet-boat which was to convey him to the quaint old town of Calais. The relations between England and France were at that time in what is called, a very ticklish state, and the traveller had encountered some difficulty in obtaining a passport, which had prevented his departure from the shores of England on the preceding day. He was somewhat impatient, indeed, to set out; for Captain Donovan had his own particular pleasures and amusements on the other side of the Channel, and he had been deprived of them for a longer period than usual; but still his thoughts were at that moment turned to other things; and so intent was his mind upon them, too, that he heard not how the wind whistled and the sea roared.

"He's in good hands," said Donovan, mentally; "he's in good hands. Master Gamble knows his part, and he will play it out. If he does not reach one-and-twenty,

Sir Theodore Broughton. II.

I have no one to account to but myself. It is getting devilish near, however; and some progress must be made. I will give them three months, and then see what is to be done."

He paused, and rising, walked to the window which looked out upon the port, murmuring, "I wonder when this cursed boat will sail. It is blowing very hard. — Why, who the deuce is that passing?" he continued, as a figure hurried rapidly across the window. "Gamble, upon my life! The lad must be dead. — He would not leave him, I am sure;" and throwing up the sash, he called out, "Gamble — Doctor Gamble!"

The worthy doctor turned and looked at him, exclaiming, "Oh, captain, I am glad to see you, Sir; I was looking for you, but could get no information as to where you had put up."

"Come in, come in," cried Donovan, and while Gamble walked round to the door which was on the other side of the house, a look of savage triumph came over Donovan's face. "It must be so," he said, in a low voice, "it must be so! — Some accident, or perhaps a duel."

The next minute Doctor Gamble entered, looked round the room to see that there was no one in it except his pupil's guardian, and then advancing to Captain Donovan, said, with a grave and respectful look, "I have something serious to tell you, Sir, which will require you to put off your voyage."

"Oh, that is easily done, Gamble," replied Captain Donovan; "what is it? Has any thing happened to Sir Theodore?"

"I am sorry to say there has," answered the doctor; "a very serious affair, indeed."

"Well, well, out with it! Don't keep me in suspense," cried Donovan; "what has happened?"

"Why you must know, captain," replied the tutor, "that, he thought fit to fall in love with a young girl, the daughter of a Captain Malcolm — who is dead by the way — but that does not matter, for she is under the guardianship of that fire-eating devil, with whom you sent him to town, Major Brandrum, or Major Ravenous Crow. Sir Theodore, as she was somewhat coy, made up a little scheme for carrying her off. I could not thwart him in his proceedings you know, captain; and, indeed, you told me not; 'lest the young horse should kick over the traces,' as you justly apprehended."

"There, there, never mind what you could do, or what you could not do," exclaimed Captain Donovan, sharply, "on with your tale, man."

"Well, the scheme failed," continued Doctor Gamble; "the girl cried out when she found they were not taking her to London; a fellow was going by on horseback and stopped the chaise; and somehow your two good friends, Messieurs Brandrum and Lisle, instantly fixed upon Sir Theodore and your humble servant as the parties concerned in 'the abduction,' as they called it. They tracked us down to St. Albans, with

the fierceness and shrewdness of two bloodhounds, and while we were quietly breakfasting in the coffee-room with another gentleman or two, in they came, horsehip in hand. Two or three words to Sir Theodore; and an evasive answer on his part, was all that passed; and they set to. The major horse-whipped him, and the captain horsewhipped me; and, 'pon my life! I have not had such another flogging since I got from under old Burgess's rod."

"Well, well, what followed?" demanded Donovan; "did Sir Theodore call him out? Have they fought?"

"It might all have been avoided," replied Doctor Gamble; "but, unfortunately, there was a wild Irish fellow in the room who instantly took upon him to act as Sir Theodore's friend, doing things in the most gingerly manner, as if cold iron and hair triggers were mere matters of etiquette. He offered to do the same for me, but I begged to decline his friendship — d — n him — and finding that the meeting is to take place to-morrow, at the back of Montague-house, I hurried down here to find you, knowing by your last letter that you must be crossing about this time."

"And so I must," replied Captain Donovan, sternly, putting his hands behind his back; "I have business of importance to transact which cannot be delayed. The young fool must brew as he has baked — he has made his bed, let him lie upon it. I shall be off in half an hour."

"But, my dear Sir!" exclaimed Doctor Gamble, whose interests it did not at all suit that Sir Theodore Broughton should be removed from his superintendence by a pistol-

ball or a lunge of a small sword. — But just as he spoke the door opened, and a rough-looking man appeared, touching his hat to Captain Donovan, without taking it off.

"Please, Sir," said the intruder, "Captain Butler sent me up to say, there's no chance of the boat getting out to-day. The wind's dead against her and blowing a gale."

"There, there!" cried Doctor Gamble, "now you have no excuse."

"I seek no excuse, Sir," cried Donovan, turning on him fiercely; "take care what you say."

"But, my dear Sir, my dear captain, you really must interfere," said the tutor. "You do not consider he is but nineteen."

"Lisle shot Sir Charles Chevenix when he was younger," answered Donovan, gloomily; "if the young man will get himself into such scrapes, he must abide the consequences."

"Well, then, I will stop it myself," said Gamble, in a determined tone. "The lad does not want to fight unless he is driven to it; and I will stop it."

"What will you do?" asked Captain Donovan, in a sharp tone.

"I will go back directly," replied the tutor, who saw he had got an advantage, "and give information at Bow-street, telling the magistrate that I have done all I can to persuade you to interfere; but that, being a military man, you will not, although you are his relation, guardian, and next heir to his property."

"Sir!" exclaimed Donovan, in a voice of thunder; and then he stood glaring at him for a full minute, with the look of a tiger ready to spring. But Doctor Gamble had gone too far to recede, and after a brief pause he asked, "Shall I, in so speaking, say anything but the truth?"

"Truth!" said Donovan, with a bitter sneer curling his lip; "what do you care for truth?" and turning away, he walked moodily to the window again.

The tutor paused for a few moments, and then taking up his hat which he had laid down upon the table, he said, "Well, captain, as you will not go, I must."

"Stay, stay," said the other, in a milder tone, but still one of much vexation; "this is the greatest annoyance in the world. I promised to be at Amiens yesterday, but could not get my passport signed; and now I shall be kept till the day after to-morrow."

"Oh, never mind, never mind," said Doctor Gamble, with a sly leer; "she will wait for you."

Donovan laughed somewhat affectedly, saying, "You are a fool, Gamble; but if I must go, I must. Only remember this is the last time I will interfere in such a business. I may chance to get myself shot instead of him, for meddling in such affairs; and I have a good deal to do in the world yet."

"I don't doubt it," answered Gamble, drily; "but now, as you have taken your resolution, let us set out at once."

Captain Donovan, however, contrived to create a great number of delays. Had the packet-boat been about to sail at the hour which had been stated, he certainly would have been too late — if he really required so much time to pack up his portmanteau. Then he must needs dine before he went, trying to reconcile Doctor Gamble to his procrastination by the delicacy of the viands he ordered. The time for starting, however, at length arrived; and though Captain Donovan would not afford four horses, away went he and the tutor at a very tolerable rate; but as they were in a hack post-chaise, which had to be changed at every stage, there were numerous opportunities of wasting time, which Donovan took advantage of. At other moments he lay back dozing in the chaise; or, putting out his head, told the post-boy not to break their necks by rattling down hill; or meditating over the perfections and qualities of Doctor Gamble, wished that he were not quite so much in his secrets.

The morning was grey when they reached London; but Gamble, who understood the game only too well, called to the post-boy, without asking any permission, to drive straight to the back of Montague-house, as fast as he could go; and away they went. As they came near, Donovan listened for the crack of a pistol, but all was still; and when they reached the road (which at that time ran at the back of what is now Portman-square,) and looked over the hedge into the neighbouring field, they saw a group of three persons, consisting of Major Brandrum, Reginald Lisle, and a

gentleman in black; while coming over the stile appeared Sir Theodore Broughton and another young man, seven or eight years older.

"There they are," cried Doctor Gamble; "now, let us be quick. Pull up, boy! Pull up!"

Donovan had by this time taken his resolution, and merely saying, sternly, "Leave the whole to me, Sir," he sprang out of the chaise, while Doctor Gamble followed at a considerable distance, having certain reminiscences of Reginald Lisle's handiwork, which rendered too near an approach to that gentleman unpleasant. In one minute, Captain Donovan was over the hedge and close to the would-be combatants; and to have seen him at that moment, one would have supposed that no one could be more eager to prevent his ward from suffering the consequences of his ill-conduct.

"What is this, gentlemen?" he exclaimed, in a loud and stern tone; "what is this, Sir?" and he bent his brows upon Sir Theodore with a frown which had often made the youth shrink into himself in terror. Nor was it without effect even now; for although Sir Theodore had been able at once to assume a new character with a man whom he despised like Doctor Gamble, there was a sort of dark enthralling spell connected with his very earliest memories of the man now before him, which he could not shake off; and for a minute after Donovan's sudden and unexpected appearance, the young baronet stood silent, with his eyes turned to the ground.

His Irish companion, however, undertook to answer for him, saying, with a strong Irish accent, "The matter, Sir, is a very simple one. Those gentlemen just coming near, thought fit to horsewhip both our young friend here and a person I understand to be his tutor, — that person there behind — which, indeed, any gentleman has a right to do to another, if he considers himself aggrieved. Our young friend here thought fit in return to call his assailant to account in the usual way, which any gentleman has a right to do also."

"If he have arrived at the years of discretion," said Donovan, sternly.

"That has nothing to do with the matter," said the other, who could not comprehend that the person newly arrived had any authority in the affair. "Now, you look very much like a gentleman, Sir, so I will just beg you either to withdraw, or stand quiet and not meddle."

Captain Donovan laughed. "Very good," he said; "and see this boy, my ward, shot before my face. Sir, you are very much mistaken; and if you do not very speedily take your case away, and be off, you will be in the hands of the officers of Bow-street in five minutes. — No blustering, Sir, if you please. We know how to deal with gentlemen of your warlike propensities; and I can tell you you have not too much time to spare. Now, Major Braadrum, what apology do you demand of Sir Theodore Broughton? He shall make it immediately, for I am informed of what has occurred, and see that it is due."

"I will make none," murmured the young man, in a low but determined voice.

Major Brandrum, however, saved all contention on the subject, by his reply. "I have no apology to require, Captain Donovan," he said; "Sir Theodore Broughton thought fit to behave to a young lady, whom I have adopted as my child, in a manner both rascally and ungentlemanlike, and not the less ungentlemanlike because it was rascally, nor the less rascally because it was ungentlemanlike. Seeing that he is a mere lad — though he thinks himself a man — I punished him as a lad, and horsewhipped him soundly. I never, however, refuse to fight, when any body asks me; and, therefore, I came here by his appointment, though the morning is windy and the hour somewhat early."

"It might have been better to treat him as a boy to the end, major," replied Donovan. "However, you are a soldier, and a gentleman of honour, and I, being in the same service, must make allowance for professional prejudices. I may trust, however, to your good feeling, I am sure, to promise me that you will not give him another meeting while I am absent from England, as business of importance calls me to France."

"I really cannot tell, Sir," replied Brandrum; "it entirely depends upon his own conduct. In reference to this affair, I certainly shall not meet him again; for once is enough in all conscience; but if he still thinks fit to behave ill to any one under my protection, I shall most likely treat him as I did before, and then things must take their course accord-

ing to circumstances. Come, Lisle: I think we have had enough of this, and we are likely to get blown away in this wind."

Thus saying, he walked away, followed by Reginald Lisle and the gentleman in black. They reached a hackney coach which was waiting for them in the other road, and when they were seated, Lisle, who bore a greatly puzzled look, said, in a low tone, "This is curious, Crow."

"Very!" said Major Brandrum, drily; and then added, "we have been doing the fellow injustice in our hearts. His conduct is certainly strange; but it is evident that he can entertain no sinister designs such as I had fancied."

In the mean time Captain Donovan was somewhat at a loss how to deal with Sir Theodore Broughton, whose Irish friend having a much greater antipathy to incarceration than to a pistol bullet, had disappeared somewhat rapidly from the scene of action, after the officers of Bow-street had been mentioned. To remonstrate with the youth was absolutely necessary, but to treat him altogether as a boy was not possible, and would not have been expedient according to Donovan's views, even if it had been. He therefore determined to cut his sermon very short, on the pretence of anxiety to get back to Dover at once; and in a few short sentences, severe enough, though mingled with a sarcastic jest here and there, he pointed out all that a commonplace view of dissipation and duelling could suggest — very well knowing, that commonplaces never have the slightest effect in the way of warning or dissuasion. He looked three

times at Doctor Gamble with an expression of countenance which the tutor did not at all like; but whatever it was that fermented in his mind at the moment, it brought forth nothing; and leaving his ward still under the guidance of his ill-chosen tutor, he quitted them, and took his way back at once towards the sea-coast.

When Donovan was seated in the chaise and rolling away from London, he ground his teeth bitterly, murmuring, "Ay, Master Gamble, your day will come. In the mean time, your vices and licentiousness will do my work for me, while you think you are doing your own."

CHAPTER II.

ABON HASSAN wished to be Caliph for only one day; and I sincerely wish that I could be a woman for only one day. Let it be understood, I would not for the world be one for any longer space, as I look upon it that woman, like every weak thing, is hardly used by man. If I could have my wish, I might perhaps be able afterwards to give the reader some account of the feelings of Mary Chevenix, as Reginald Lisle sat beside her at supper, where we left him at the end of the twenty-fourth chapter of the first volume. As a man, however, it is impossible to do so accurately. The general facts, indeed, I can state; but all those minute shades of emotion, those fine soft lines of feeling, which display the principal difference between the mind of woman and that of man, I must pass over in silence. One must be, or have been, a woman, to know them — and, perhaps, something more than a woman, to tell them.

When Reginald first entered the room, where she and Lady Chevenix had been sitting up for the return of her father and Sir Harry Jarvis, her sensations were strangely mingled. The joy and surprise of seeing him, and her uncertainty as to what character he had come in, and what was his motive for coming, together with some apprehension as to

what might be her mother's conduct and demeanour towards him, were enough to agitate her greatly; but through all other emotions stole one small thread of doubt, which, however thin and filmy, chequered and dimmed the golden web of love and hope most sadly.

When she gave him her hand, it trembled, and her cheek varied through every hue of the rose, from nearly white to crimson. But when she looked up in his face, the expression with which he regarded her, the deep and intense love in his eyes made her hand tremble still more, but made her heart flutter also with renewed trust. Had any one spoken for an hour, with the tongue of eloquence itself, upon the theme of Reginald Lisle's constancy, and truth, and affection, the result would have been less than the effect of that one look.

Let us pass over all explanations and minor particulars — how Lady Chevenix told all that had occurred, and said she had not known how to act, and how she and Mary had had a very anxious dinner, and how she was sure her husband and Sir Harry would be half tired half famished to death, and how she had taken the liberty of ordering the cook to exercise his best skill on the supper, and how it would be on the table directly, now that they were returned. Nor should I wish to detain the reader, to describe how Reginald Lisle and Major Brandrum washed their hands, and brushed the dirt off their persons, and consulted together for a minute or two before supper. It was all very right at the time; but we have nothing to do with it. Let

us seat Reginald once more beside her he loved, and tell what was Lady Chevenix's demeanour towards him; for that was a point in regard to which he and Mary, too, were not a little anxious.

She was civil enough; that is, perhaps, the only way to describe her conduct; but what a different thing that is from being cordial. She failed in no rule of politeness; she was not even cold and distant. Her husband's presence and his known wishes shielded Reginald from that negative kind of repulsion; for Lady Chevenix was a really good woman, and wished to please her husband very much; but still she was not cordial. She could not forget that Lisle had fought a duel with Sir Charles, and wounded him severely. She did not forget it; indeed, she did not try; and Reginald felt it. Nor was it without effect upon his own demeanour. He said to himself, "It is evident that Lady Chevenix is not well disposed towards me. I must contrive to win her esteem, to teach her to forget that unfortunate affair, before I venture to press my suit, or even to show my love openly. Although she is all submission to her husband, yet I know right well how much a mother's opinion must influence a father in such circumstances; how the private ear of affection will listen even to arguments unreasonable; how the whispered word will damage; the reiterated objection will have weight. She sees not that I love her daughter — they none of them see it, but Mary herself; and I must not let them see it, till I have won upon their regard as well as hers."

I know not whether the resolution was wise or foolish; but one effect it had, which was unfortunate. It put a restraint upon his manner towards Mary herself; it made it far less warm, far less tender than love might well have been, even under the restrictions of society. Mary thought his conduct strange; the thin thread of doubt appeared again, running throughout the web of hope, and she was very silent during the rest of the meal.

At length, the party rose to retire to rest, and Major Brandrum significantly informed Sir Harry Jarvis that he and his young companion should most probably ride on to St. Albans, before breakfast, on business of importance.

"I have half a mind to go with you, major," said Sir Charles Chevenix; but his wife instantly interposed, saying, "You forget, my dear Charles, you will have to go over to Colonel Lutwich's for Miss Malcolm, as Sir Harry has just told you, he must be all day in London."

Sir Charles Chevenix thought that his wife could fulfil that task as well as himself; but he knew her habits, both of mind and body; he knew that there would be a hundred objections to overcome, which he did not choose to war with; and therefore he merely replied, "I *had* forgot."

"I trust, gentlemen, you will make Jarworth your half-way house on the way back," said Sir Harry Jarvis, addressing Major Brandrum and Lisle. "I shall be absent to-morrow, myself; but Chevenix and her ladyship, and my fair young friend here, will entertain you. On the following day, if you will do me the honour of staying, I

will endeavour to induce Colonel Lutwich to meet you at dinner."

Both Major Brandrum and Reginald Lisle promised to take Jarworth Park on their return from St. Albans; and the major charged one of Sir Harry's servants with a note to London, requiring somewhat more suitable habiliments for a dinner table than those in which they had ridden thither.

On the following morning, early, they set out for St. Albans; and with a part of what was done there, the reader is already acquainted. After the scene in the coffee-room of one inn, they returned exceedingly calmly to the other; the major laughing heartily at the contortions of Doctor Gamble, under the lash of Reginald Lisle, which he had not failed to remark even while inflicting a similar but more moderate dose of the same medicine upon Sir Theodore Broughton.

"I wonder, my boy," he said, "how that fellow would bear a slow fire, with splinters of resinous pine stuck into the calves of his fat legs. Heavens! what a shout the Slippery Snake, and Bald Eagle, and all the rest of the tribe would have set up, to see him writhing so under such a puny thing as a horsewhip. They would have danced themselves mad with delight."

Reginald was somewhat graver; and, when they had reached their inn, and ordered their breakfast, he called for a newspaper; and one of the meagre, yellow things, so denominated in that day, was brought him by the waiter,

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over which he cast his eyes, somewhat indifferently at first. After a while, however, a sudden eagerness seemed to seize him: his eye was fixed intently on the page; and, after reading a few lines more, he exclaimed, "Here is intelligence, indeed, Crow! The enemy have landed on the west coast, and plundered a village. It is not well ascertained, whether it was a party of Frenchmen, or the crew of the American squadron, which had been hanging about upon the coast. But the news is certain."

"A chance of active employment, Lisle," replied the major. "Well, I have nothing to do, but provide for this girl, fight this boy, and then I am ready. To say truth, I am tired of inactivity, and should have to do some exceedingly extravagant thing very soon, just to relieve the monotony of existence. Well, here comes breakfast; and, as soon as that is over, let us march. Perhaps Sir Harry may bring back a budget of news from London to-night."

But neither Lisle nor his friend were destined to stay long at Jarworth Park. They rode thither rapidly, for Reginald was not without hopes of gaining Mary's ear for a few dear private moments; but the first words of Sir Harry's butler were, "Your servant, Sir, has come down with your things from London, wishing to see you directly, and Major Brandrum too."

"What does he want?" asked Lisle, with the impatience of apprehended disappointment.

"He has got a letter for you, Sir, from the commander-

in-chief," replied the butler, "and one for the major too. I will call him up directly: he is in the servants' hall."

Without quitting the vestibule, Reginald received the letter where he stood. It was a mere formal epistle, requiring him to put all other things aside, and report himself at head quarters without any delay. There was also a vague hint that his services might be wanted immediately in the field; for official brevity had not then reached its climax; but still the epistle was dry and impenetrable enough. The letter to Major Brandrum was precisely the same, written by the same clerk, in the same hand, and the same words, and signed by the same officer.

"We must take wing at once, Regy," said the Ravenous Crow; "the service bears no delay, and the order is peremptory."

"We must see if Lady Chevenix and Sir Charles are within, in order to make our excuses," said Reginald. The major smiled; but the butler, who had been standing by, put an end to Captain Lisle's hope, even of one more glimpse, by saying, "Sir Charles has not returned yet, Sir; and her ladyship is out walking with Miss Chevenix."

"Well, then, we must trust you to bear our apology, my good friend," said Major Brandrum. "Pray inform Sir Harry how deeply we regret not being able to stay to dinner; and here, show him that letter; he will see by that, what it is that hurries us away so fast." Thus saying, he passed out, and remounted his horse, while

Reginald only remained to give the necessary orders to his servant for following with his baggage.

When Mary Chevenix returned, about half an hour after her lover had departed, she had the disappointment of finding that he had been there, and gone again; and a bitter disappointment it was, for she had been dreaming a dream of spending half an hour with him before dinner, at some time, and in some spot, where they could speak all they felt, and where he, she hoped, might explain all that seemed strange. The letter was shown to her, however. She saw that Lisle had no choice but to obey; and as she was not in the least of a captious nature, she did not even fancy, that he could have found an excuse if he had been very much in love.

Her father returned shortly after with Kate Malcolm; and, perhaps, Lady Chevenix received the fair truant more warmly than her daughter did, for there was still that little dark thread of doubt which Mary could not remove, do what she would.

"I will try before I sleep to tear it out, even if I tear my own heart too," she thought; and she listened to all Kate told her mother of the kindness and delicacy with which Colonel Lutwich had treated her, with much interest, even under her quiet demeanour. The three ladies were alone together, for Sir Charles went at once to write letters; and Lady Chevenix questioned Kate closely as to the person who had practised so base a stratagem upon her, and his object. Even before two women, the subject

embarrassed the poor girl; but her catechist wrung Sir Theodore Broughton's name from her, and then exclaimed, "Why, surely some one told me he was in the inn at Dunstable on the night of the fire."

"He was, indeed," answered Kate Malcolm; "he insulted me very grossly there; but Captain Lisle came up and —"

But the remembrance of that night oppressed her; and while her cheek turned crimson, her eyes were suffused with tears, and she stopped.

How strange a thing is jealousy! that most bitter pre-conception of the mind — which blinds the most clear-sighted, hardens the most just! There was not a person on all the earth better fitted by nature to comprehend and sympathize with the emotions which produced so much agitation in Kate Malcolm than Mary Chevenix, and yet now she attributed all to a wrong cause. The blush and the tears were close coupled with the name of Reginald Lisle; and she thought they must be given to him. The reader may ask, Why? — and there is but one answer, "Because she loved him herself."

Still she was resolved to be further satisfied. She fancied herself very reasonable indeed. She said she would not judge without full proofs: she resolved that she would not let jealousy have the least dominion. Nevertheless, she was very grave and silent during dinner; and when the ladies had retired from the table, she took advantage of her mother's absence for a few minutes to put

her own questions to Kate. Nor did she do so quite sincerely. No, reader, Mary did not act sincerely towards her young companion — no woman stung by jealousy ever does — perhaps no woman in love. However, it was the first time in her life, and it was the last likewise; for she found afterwards, that had she been but as frank on this occasion as on others, she would have saved herself much misery. As soon as Lady Chevenix was gone, Mary went and sat down beside Kate upon a sofa, and putting her hand on hers, she said, "And so, Kate, this young officer came very opportunely to your assistance." She would not mention Reginald's name, for fear her face should betray her own secrets while she was seeking those of another.

A glow instantly came up in Kate Malcolm's face, for she, on her part, had been thinking of Colonel Lutwich for the last half hour, and Mary's eyes were searching her countenance eagerly. "Very opportunely, indeed," she answered; "I should not have known what to do had he not come up: for I did not know my way, or anything."

"And he was very kind to you?" asked Mary.

"He was, indeed," replied Kate.

"A little in love, too, with that fair glowing face, I've a notion?" said Mary.

Kate blushed still, but made no answer; and Mary went on. "Nay, tell me, Kate, — tell a friend who can

counsel, and, perhaps, help you. Did he not say he loved you?"

"Oh, do not ask me any more questions!" exclaimed Kate Malcolm; but her face made confession, and Mary's heart sank low — very low. She could not speak for a moment, though she longed to go on — to have the admission in words; and just as she was framing another question, and struggling with herself for voice, Lady Chevenix returned.

The impression, however, was made — the fears confirmed. They seemed to her no longer doubts, but realities; and Mary, pleading headache, but too truly, retired early — not to rest, but to weep.

On the following morning she was up, and dressed, and out, before any one else in the house was stirring. She felt that she needed the free air; rooms were too close and narrow for the feelings which struggled in her bosom. She wished to catechise her own heart, — to ask herself if she was the person to blame — if with foolish weakness or idle vanity, she had mistaken mere common compliment, and, perhaps, a somewhat too warm and winning manner, for the words of love and the looks of affection. But her heart absolved her. There could be no mistake. All she had to blame herself for, was for listening too eagerly to one who was so little known to her. Yet she strove not to admit that either: he had seemed so frank, so true, so high principled; and equally unwilling to blame him — strange as it may seem — she threw the fault upon the

shoulders of his whole sex. "They are all deceitful," she said; "they are all fickle. I have heard a thousand instances of it. I must tear out this love from my heart. Willingly, I will never see him more. What is it makes me feel unkind and angry towards poor Kate? It is not her fault, dear girl, and I will not suffer my heart to be embittered. I will forget him, not think of him. — He can be nothing more to me. Let her be happy with him; but I must not see it, — I cannot see! — Well, well."

As she thus pondered, and while she was trying to nerve her mind for the course before her, she was walking up and down an avenue of old trees; and how long she had been there Heaven knows, — for in such internal strife time flies fast, — when she saw her father coming towards her. Mary had not been weeping; all her tears had been spent upon her pillow: otherwise she might have tried to avoid him. There is, however, a sort of recklessness in despair, which, perhaps, might have led her to go on, even had she known that her father would see her suffering, and divine its cause. She hardly cared now who knew it, except Kate Malcolm. — That she could not have borne.

Sir Charles advanced towards her in his gay, good humoured manner, holding out his arms to clasp her for his morning's embrace; and, when held to his bosom, Mary felt, perhaps for the first time fully, what a blessed thing is a parent's love.

"You look pale, my girl," he said; "have you not slept well? Have all our adventures been too much for you?"

Fie, fie! I thought you were brimful of chivalry and romance, Mary; and let me tell you that many of our knights-errant in petticoats would give their ears for such luck as you have had. To be robbed and escape murder, to be burnt out and escape singeing, to lose a little friend and find her again all safe, is not the chance of every one, Mrs. Mary."

"I have not much luck of any kind," answered his daughter; "and in truth, dear papa, I should not covet luck of that sort. I would rather not be robbed, or burnt out, or lose a friend at all."

"You ungrateful little toad," cried Sir Charles, laughing. "No luck at all, did she say? What! with the best mother and the best father in the country, and the largest fortune to boot, at least within fifty miles of Dunsmore."

"Nay, the fortune I care very little about," answered Mary Chevenix; "but for the best father and the best mother I am not ungrateful. That, indeed, is a blessing;" and she ended with a sigh.

Sir Charles Chevenix saw she was unhappy. He loved her dearly, too; and yet he resolved to make her more unhappy before he had done; for he thought it would be salutary. Almost all fathers are rough physicians, even in their love; but it were wise, when about to give a wholesome bitter to a child, to be sure that they have got hold of the right bottle. Sir Charles had got the wrong, and he proceeded to administer to his daughter more of the same poison which she had lately been tasting. He spoke

of Kate Malcolm, and expressed sympathy with the disappointment she must have felt on the preceding day at "Captain Lisle being obliged to be absent." He then went on to say, "I thought of asking her to stay with us for a week or two in Grosvenor-square; but as Lisle is likely to be busy, if all this sharp work is to go on, it would be better, perhaps, to take her to his mother's at once. There they will have more opportunities of being together; for, of course, he must often go to see Mrs. Lisle, and can kill two birds with one stone. What do you say, Mary?"

"I think so certainly, in such circumstances," replied his daughter, in a wavering voice; for her heart felt as if some giant were squeezing it in a cold hand. "I shall be sorry to part with her; but, of course, she will be more happy there."

Sir Charles was a little puzzled; for, though her manner was somewhat agitated, her words were calm. As she bore it well, however, he thought he might go on; and he proceeded to tell her how angry and indignant Reginald Lisle had appeared when first informed that Kate had been inveigled away. He dwelt upon all that he had observed; and, as he was in truth convinced himself, he had no difficulty in convincing her. He tortured her terribly, however; and Mary saw and felt that he was saying more, far more than he otherwise would have done, because he thought it for her good. At length, she could bear it no more; and, suddenly stopping, she looked up in her father's face with those beautiful appealing eyes, and said, "Say no more,

papa, say no more: I am quite satisfied. If I have indulged foolish fancies, they are gone for ever;" and, turning away from him, she ran back to the house.

"Poor child!" said Sir Charles, to himself, "I am afraid it has gone deeper than I thought;" and he continued to walk up and down for some time.

The party at breakfast was grave, but Mary showed herself peculiarly kind and gentle towards Kate Malcolm; and Sir Harry Jarvis, too, bestowed upon the poor orphan girl more attention than he would, perhaps, have shown to lordly guests. He often gazed at her, too, with a look of tender interest, as if scanning every line of her face, when her eyes were turned away from him. At dinner they were joined by Colonel Lutwich, and Sir Harry took an opportunity of saying to him, before Kate came down with Lady Chevenix, "You will find your fair guest of the other night, colonel, even somewhat more sad than before. To-morrow is the day appointed for her father's funeral; and, though we have not told her — not thinking it necessary for her to be present — and have persuaded her, both yesterday and to-day, to come down to dinner, yet she must feel that it is coming near."

Kate was sad, and even Lutwich's presence could not banish her gloom; for Lady Chevenix had accidentally let out the secret, which Sir Charles had wished to keep concealed till the dark ceremony was over. Lutwich, however, knew well how to feel for her; and his whole manner and demeanour spoke his sympathy. His tone might be tender,

but it was always grave throughout the evening; and he made not the slightest effort to force upon her one cheerful thought, for he knew that it would jar with her feelings. Kate did not love him less when he went away.

The next day passed with her in mourning. Sir Charles and Sir Harry Jarvis posted early in the morning to Dunstable and returned late at night; for the day following had been appointed for the Chevenix family to proceed to London. They did not set out early, however; and Colonel Lutwich was at the carriage door when they departed. He was able to gain a few moments with Kate, while some arrangements were made, and Sir Harry Jarvis handed in Lady Chevenix; but the old baronet returned for his fair young guest; and, as he led her along with somewhat formal courtesy, he said, in a low voice, but full of feeling, "My dear young lady, I should much like to disappoint good Major Brandrum, and keep you all to myself here as a daughter; but I fear I cannot make out a title to so fair a property. However, pray remember, should you at any time want assistance, support, counsel, you are to apply to none but me, and you will find a father in me."

Another step brought them to the carriage step, and Sir Harry shook hands with her and bade her farewell. The maids followed, the servants mounted their horses; and Colonel Lutwich, with a very thoughtful air, was turning towards his own steed, when the voice of the old baronet stopped him.

"Colonel — Colonel Lutwich!" said Sir Harry; "whether away so fast? Can you not spare half-an-hour for a solitary old man?"

"I have a journey before me, Sir Harry," replied Lutwich; "nevertheless I must not refuse to stay at your bidding."

"Where are you going?" asked his companion.

"Into Yorkshire," replied Lutwich, significantly. "I am not satisfied."

"Well, well; then I will not stop you," said Sir Harry Jarvis; "let me see you when you come back. I seldom dine from home."

Lutwich promised, and rode away; and before night, he was fifty miles on his way to York.

In the mean time, Sir Charles Chevenix and his party reached Grosvenor-square in safety; and the rest of the evening was passed in calm repose. On the following morning Sir Charles and Lady Chevenix drove out to convey Kate Malcolm to the cottage of Mrs. Lisle, having previously notified their intention to Major Brandrum by a note which received no answer.

Both Sir Charles and Lady Chevenix showed themselves very kind, the latter warming greatly to her young protégée on the eve of her departure. Sir Charles took care of her purse, although she would fain have refused. Lady Chevenix had before provided for her dress. Mary was sad and grave, though she strove hard to be kind too; and when Kate bade her good-bye in the drawing-room, she

kissed her tenderly, held her at a little distance from her to gaze at her, and then hung a little diamond cross round her neck, saying, "Wear that for my sake, Kate; and think of me when you are married."

Kate did not comprehend her; and as soon as she was gone, Mary ran up to her own room to weep. Hardly half an hour had elapsed when there was a loud knock at the door; and in about three minutes Mary's maid came to say that Captain Lisle was below. "He asked for Sir Charles and my lady, Ma'am, and then for you," said the girl.

The name had made Mary Cheyenix turn very red, and then very pale. "Tell him," she said, after a moment's terrible pause, "tell him, I am — that I cannot come down, as I am very busy at present:" and such, word for word, was the message which Reginald Lisle received.

CHAPTER III.

THIS work has very little to do with history — so little, indeed, that I do not half like to intrude even the smallest bit of history into it. Nevertheless, two facts must be recalled to the mind of the learned reader; for unless he does happen to remember them, he will be somewhat puzzled with regard to certain incidents recorded in these pages. Shortly after the outbreak of the American war of independence — a multitude still living can recall those times — a number of privateers belonging to the revolted colonies hovered about the British Channel and the neighbouring coasts, carrying off many of our merchant ships, daring our smaller vessels of war to action, and even, in one or two instances, making descents upon the coast, when they learned that no great force was ready to repel them, plundering villages, hamlets, and farm-houses, after a somewhat piratical fashion. Rumour, at the time, swelled these occurrences — in themselves of no great magnitude — into events of vast importance; terror and confusion spread amongst the sober citizens, and bustle and activity prevailed in the public offices. An event, which was hardly known or talked about within twenty miles of where it had occurred, was magnified in London into an invasion; and those, even, who obtained the most exact accounts in their official ca-

panic, shared the panic of the multitude, and increased it by superfluous preparations for meeting dangers which did not exist. One of the most formidable dresses which Rumour assumed was afforded to the vagrant goddess, by the fact of the French ambassador having quitted London, and the English ambassador having been recalled from Paris, while a secret treaty — as was well-known, like all other secrets, almost from the beginning — had been entered into between the absolute monarch of France and the ruling powers of the new republic. It was reported and believed for some time, even in high places, that the French and Americans combined had landed on the western coast of England; when in truth the origin of the whole story was the plunder of a farm-house by the well-known leader, Paul Jones, famous in song and tale. Troops were instantly marched from various quarters to the part of the country supposed to be threatened or assailed; the militia was called out; and all officers of skill and experience were, like Major Brandrum and Reginald Lisle, commanded to hold themselves in readiness to afford their services in repelling the enemy from our shores.

Another fact — which has been taken too little notice of in history, though it affects one of the most important points in that of any nation — the history of opinion — rendered it the more imperative upon the government to call to their aid every military man willing to serve, and able to serve well. The American war was, throughout the country, one of the most unpopular that ever was undertaken.

Whatever faults were imputable to the Americans themselves — and there were not a few, even amongst their greatest men — there could be no doubt that England had greater still towards them. A sense of the injustice, as well as the inexpediency of the war, was general, and in many cases so strong, that a very great number of distinguished officers resigned their commissions rather than take part in hostilities which they conceived iniquitous. They might be wrong, and perhaps they were in many points of view; but still such was the fact; and be it observed, that was a fact which never could occur in any country but England. These resignations greatly embarrassed the government, and made ministers only the more anxious to secure the immediate services of experienced soldiers who formed a different judgment of military duty.

Such were Major Brandrum and Reginald Lisle. Reginald, though he had his feelings as a citizen as well as a soldier, though he might disapprove of the war and condemn the measures which had produced it, would have as soon thought of flying from a field of battle, as of refusing to serve the crown on any motive of private judgment. The major, who was much more the soldier than the citizen, never thought upon the subject at all, and only disliked fighting the "Provincials," as he called them, because they spoke the same language as the English. "One hardly knows one from the other," he said, "which makes it inconvenient as well as unnatural, and not the less unnatural because it is inconvenient, nor the less inconvenient because it is unnatural."

Sir Theodore Broughton. II.

The morning of the frustrated duel passed over; and in the afternoon, the major and his young comrade presented themselves to the commander-in-chief for the second time since they had received his summons. They were very graciously received with nod and smile, and dismissed with a hint that they would hear from him that day or the next.

Lisle seemed a good deal disappointed, and as they walked home together through the busy streets, his companion remarked, "Ah, Lisle, you long to be at the old work as well as I, say what you will, though you have love and hope fettering your ancles, and I have nothing to stay me but age, and — thank God, not the rheumatism."

"I have neither love nor hope," answered Reginald, in a very gloomy tone; "those are amongst things departed, major — at least the one which gave brightness to the other is gone; and the love can be borne as heavily or as lightly in another land as here."

Brandrum looked at him with grave surprise; but he would make no effort to wring his confidence from him, well knowing it would come as soon as it was no longer painful for him to speak upon the subject at all; and after having walked on through the streets for some way, Lisle proposed that they should dine, leave word at their inn where they were to be found, and go down to spend the evening with his mother.

"Poor Miss Malcolm is there, of course, as your note from Sir Charles Chevenix intimated," he continued, "and as you and I, my dear Crow, may be winging our way to

distant lands ere long, I should wish to make her as much at home with my mother and sister as possible."

The plan thus proposed was speedily executed, and one entire peaceful night was spent by the two soldiers at Mrs. Lisle's cottage. It afforded no incident that would bear even the slightest detail, and therefore let it pass. The man of whom the world says nothing, is likely to have the happiest life; and so with those portions of time in which the author has nothing to chronicle. Alas, that it should be so! that the great efforts, the noble impulses, the generous actions, if not absolutely referable, in the catalogue of human cares and sufferings, to the same category as the pitiful strifes, the degrading vices, and the destroying crimes, seldom, very seldom, meet with any reward except that radiant glow from the inner heart, which can have no expression, and which admits of no description.

Early on the morrow, Major Brandrum and Captain Lisle were summoned to the presence of the commander-in-chief, and each received a mission, which, if not strictly of a military description, might at any moment assume that character, according to the progress of events. In two hours after, the one was on his way to Dublin, the other travelling down into Cornwall; but both received a promise of promotion and active employment upon their return, if the business entrusted to them was conducted to the satisfaction of government.

With their proceedings during their absence, — which lasted nineteen days, — I will have nothing to do, as they

do not come within the scope of this work. Suffice it to say, that Lisle found little, Major Brandrum much, to employ him, and that for the peace of the former — for that relief from corroding thought which active occupation affords — it would have been better for Reginald if they had changed places. Nor will I dwell upon his thoughts either, for the reader will well conceive what they were, while looking upon the cold refusal of Mary Chevenix to see him, as an intimation that his hopes must end. Hope, indeed, with as persevering but more benignant fire than the famous naphtha of the Greeks, will not be extinguished; and a small light rose up in his heart upon reflection. "Perhaps," he said, "I have been too hasty — perhaps some unavoidable accident prevented her from coming down to see me. At all events I will make another effort. I will call upon Sir Charles — if it be his commands, or those of Lady Chevenix, which place a barrier between Mary and me, I shall at least be able to learn the fact; and if she loves me, I may win her still."

With such thoughts he lay down to rest, and in his dreams Mary's beautiful eyes gazed on him, full of smiles, and her dear voice bade him trust. But when, on the very morning after his return, he called in Grosvenor Square, he found that the whole family had left London eight days before.

I heard a young lady once recommend a friend just about to be married, always to have in her house a bag for "odds and ends." I have made such a sort of bag of this chapter, which I beg the reader to look upon as purely

interpolated, and to be skipped or not as he pleases. It might have seemed kinder, indeed, to insert the notice to that effect, at the beginning, instead of at the end; but it is a matter of principle with me to discourage all skipping: first, because the reader can never understand the story rightly if he does skip; secondly, because he may omit something that would do him good mentally or corporeally; and, thirdly, because it is a bad compliment to the writer. And, besides, what author can ever tell, at the beginning of a chapter, what that chapter will produce before it comes to an end?

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE left Sir Theodore Broughton so long, that it is absolutely necessary to return to him, even if it be for a very short time. Such a young man is not fit to be trusted in the midst of a city like London, even though he have a tutor of the learning, experience, and prudence of Doctor Gamble by his side. I must, therefore, go back to look after him, from the moment that he left the fields at the back of Montague House. For a time, Sir Theodore Broughton was very sullen and discontented: in the hackney coach, which conveyed them back to a well-known inn in London called the Turk's Head, Doctor Gamble endeavoured in vain to engage him in agreeable conversation. He got no answer from him but a monosyllable, and that a rude one, uttered in a rude tone. Doctor Gamble then retired into himself, and asked of the counsellor within what was to be done next. Captain Donovan was evidently greatly offended and annoyed; Sir Theodore seemed no less so; and the possible — nay, probable — result of their joint dissatisfaction was by no means a pleasant subject of contemplation to the worthy tutor. How it was to be avoided, became the great question; and he revolved that point in his mind very seriously for the rest of the way. He had often seen self-confidence and a somewhat domineering air succeed with

men of no great force of character, and he had always seen it succeed with Sir Theodore himself. Circumstances had changed, indeed; the young baronet had assumed the tone and air of manhood; but still there was something in the good doctor's heart which led him to judge that the native weakness had not been eradicated entirely; and, indeed, the youth's behaviour during the short interval of Captain Donovan's presence, proved that there was something he was prepared to reverence and obey.

"If I am to be dismissed," thought Doctor Gamble, "I may as well carry matters with a high hand. Perhaps that may put affairs right again, and I am no worse; but I must be tender, too — affectionate, d—d affectionate. I will let him begin; I'll not say another word. That will make him feel awkward at the outset, and then I will look for an advantage."

But Sir Theodore Broughton did not seem to feel at all awkward about the matter; and, as soon as Doctor Gamble and he were once more quietly introduced into his sitting-room at the Turk's Head, he gazed gloomily at the tutor for a moment, and then said, "Very pretty this, Sir."

"Very pretty indeed, Sir Theodore," answered Doctor Gamble, with perfect coolness: "I never saw a very ugly affair more nicely settled. Of all the many very difficult transactions I have had to deal with in life, I shall always look back to this as the most delicately managed."

"Let me tell you, Doctor Gamble," exclaimed Sir Theodore, in a loud and angry tone, —

“Pooh, pooh!” cried the tutor, almost contemptuously; “you are heated, young gentleman. Wait till you are cool, and you will find reason to thank me most gratefully. — Do you think, Sir,” he continued, with great volubility, that I was going to see you shot before my face by one of the most notorious marksmen in Europe, who would knock any button off your coat at the first shot? Had he chosen small swords instead of pistols, I might not have interfered, inasmuch as you might be somewhat equally matched. You are a good swordsman, and what you wanted in practice you might make up in activity.”

Sir Theodore thought not, for he recollected a certain scene between Major Brandrum and Colonel Lutwich, at Stratton-upon-Dunsmore, which showed no want of activity upon the part of the former. Doctor Gamble went on, however, without giving him time to comment. “To have you to fight him with pistols would have been to consent to your murder. I had only one of two courses to pursue — to give information at Bow-street, and have you all apprehended and conveyed to prison, or to fetch your guardian with all speed, by which your honour would remain intact, and your person be saved incarceration. You may think it a very fine thing to be killed for the sake of a pretty girl, but I know it is a much finer thing to live for half a dozen. Why should you go out of the world at not much more than nineteen like a drowned kitten, when you have every sort of enjoyment that the world — a very pleasant world it is too — can afford you, only waiting to be tasted? It might

suit you very well, Sir Theodore, to have a bullet sent through your young hot brains, or into your warm passionate heart, but it would not suit me at all."

"Who brought me so near it?" asked Sir Theodore, sternly; for though the words of his tutor had not been without effect in raising up very unpleasant considerations, which had been smothered in the heat of passion and under a false sense of honour, yet his angry disappointment at all that had taken place was in but a small degree softened.

"Not I," answered Gamble, boldly; "the devil and ill luck brought you so near it, The best laid scheme may fail, Sir Theodore, as ours did. I had nothing to do with its failure. It was accident or treachery upon some other part than mine. I did my best to please you and to assist you in your object; and had not a very extraordinary chance intervened, the girl would most likely now be sitting beside you at St. Albans, with her hand in yours. We must try what we can do to recover from our failure, but it is not grateful of you to reproach me when I have both laboured and suffered in your cause."

He presented a pleasant picture to the young man's mind, which he calculated it would seize upon at once — for he was a great calculator — nor was he deceived in this instance, for Sir Theodore Broughton, though by no means a peculiar character, had, amidst much weakness, certain points — I will not say of strength — but of stiffness. In many things he was pertinacious to a degree beyond obstinacy. This disposition had shown itself in very capricious fashions from

his infancy, sometimes in the books he would read, sometimes in the amusements he would seek, and even Captain Donovan, although he never knew beforehand in what his ward's pertinacity would display itself, had been fain to yield when the first symptoms appeared, for he soon learned that to oppose or thwart only rendered him more determined. I do not know that I have used the right word, for perhaps determination had nothing to do with it. No operation of the mind seemed to take place: it was a sort of instinct of the flesh to seek more earnestly, to pursue more eagerly that which he had set his mind upon as soon as impediments presented themselves.

Doctor Gamble was aware of all this, and he was quite sure that, instead of being discouraged by the failure of his evil schemes, the young man would only go on more vehemently, and that every thing which presented to him an image of success would be pleasant to him, and soften the asperity of disappointment and disgrace.

There were two points in the doctor's reply which Sir Theodore seized upon: the one to feast his imagination, without comment; the other, to consult upon at once. The idea of sitting beside Kate Malcolm, with her hand in his, only stayed him for a moment, however, and then he remarked in a more placable tone than he had hitherto used, "You say, we must try what we can do to recover from our failure. Something we must do, certainly; but what it is I do not see. Can your wit help now, doctor?"

Gamble was inclined to be a little coy. "I will try upon

certain conditions, Sir Thoodore," he said; "I will not any more take the responsibility upon myself. I will do every thing I can to serve you, my young friend, but first I will lay the whole matter before you fairly and clearly. Then you shall say, go on, or stop; and whether what we do attempt fails or not, I will not be blamed."

"You will expect to be praised if it succeeds, I dare say," replied the young baronet, with a laugh; "but go on, that is agreed. What step can we take now?"

"I would first ascertain how we have been frustrated," replied the doctor; "we must know what engines are at work against us, before we can determine how to meet them."

"Oh, that is plain enough," replied Sir Theodore, impatiently: "Major Brandrum and Captain Lisle are the engines — and strong enough engines to encounter, too," he added, bitterly.

"I think you are mistaken, my young friend," answered Gamble. "I saw the man, Ben Ploughshare, for a minute before I went out of town, and a word or two which he let fall, makes me think that neither Lisle nor Brandrum had anything to do with snatching your pretty little pigeon out of the net. We shall learn more from him when we can talk with him."

"The vagabond was here yesterday," replied Sir Theodore, "wanting money. But I was busy with Fitzgerald, and told him to apply to you."

"He will soon find us out again, depend upon it," answered the doctor; and now, having brought the business to this point and contrived to efface all traces of anger from his pupil's mind, Gamble turned to another frequent topic of thought, which, indeed, he never entirely forgot, and added, "But now, Sir Theodore, I must crave some breakfast. I have not touched meat or drink for fifteen hours."

"Poor Doctor Gamble," cried Sir Theodore, sarcastically, "I wonder he is living after such a fast. You would not do for a popish priest, doctor, I suspect."

"I do not know," replied the tutor. "I fancy I fast and pray as much as most of them; and as for celibacy, search all the parish registers through England, and I will defy you to find the name of Stephen Gamble coupled with that of any thing in woman's shape."

Thus saying, he rang the bell and ordered breakfast, of a kind to make ample amends for his long abstinence.

The meal was barely over, and Gamble was lolling in his chair according to an invariable custom of his, to chew the cud, as it were, for a quarter of an hour after every operation of the jaws, when the personage of whom they had been lately speaking made his appearance, and was soon in familiar chat with the baronet and his tutor. He was a keen vivacious fellow, always cheerful, though laughing little, with a sharp hawk-like bill, and a roving unsatisfied eye. As if he had been an honest tradesman, he began

the conversation after the first salutations, by asking for the settlement of his little account.

"Why, you rascal," answered Gamble, who knew well how to deal with him; "you did not succeed, you know. You had enough in hand to pay you well. If you had not spoiled the job you would have had more."

"Not my fault, 'pon honour, gentlemen," answered Ben, with perfect composure. "I told you all about it, doctor, and you must see —"

"Stop, stop, Master Ben," replied Doctor Gamble; "you did not tell me *all* about it — I was in too great a hurry to stay. So you must tell us now, and if we find you really could not help it, of course Sir Theodore will consider your services."

"Well, Sir, you see the case was this," replied Ben, "though I can't make a long story of it; for I was never good at a long story in my life, and I recollect once when an old beak said, 'Give an account of yourself, Sir;' I had nothing to say but, 'Please your worship I can't.' — However, I got the young lady safely out of the park and down the lane, and into the road; but just at the corner by the Skittles — I dare say you know the Skittles, doctor, it is a noted house — I saw two men a' horseback. There had been one on the Hertford road, just by the bar — but as soon as they saw me, they drew out and one of them said, 'You can't pass here,' so I wheeled round and —"

"Did you know either of the two men, that you turned so fast?" asked Doctor Gamble. "I should have thought you

and your friend upon the horse might have forced your way against only two."

"Did I know them," said Ben, with a laugh; "to be sure, I knew them fast enough. One was Captain Swan, and t'other was Dick Bromer; and if we 'd tried to go on they 'd have shot us or the cattle. So, as I was saying, I wheeled round and took to the lanes; but whichever way I turned there were folks to head us, and I soon saw it was a regular thing, and that they must have nosed the job, for all along, here and there — sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, I saw Lutwich himself — that is the Colonel — and his lad Hal. Over hedges and ditches they went, as if it were nothing. He 's a capital rider to be sure; and then, when at last I thought we had cut away from him clean, up he comes again, and the young woman puts her head out and holloas, and he 's afore the pole in a minute, and that there pistol in his hand that 's not like to miss."

The start which Sir Theodore Broughton gave at the name of Lutwich had not stopped the narrator, though he remarked it; but when he came to this part of his tale he looked in the young baronet's face with one eye half closed, and added, "You know the colonel, I should reckon, Sir; and if you do, you know he 's one not to be meddled with more than a bull-dog."

"He must not meddle with me much more," said Sir Theodore; and he was going on to give further vent to his anger, when Gamble interposed, saying, "Stay, stay;

how can he have got scent of this? You say you are sure it was a regular plan of his to stop you wherever you turned?"

"Quite sure," replied Ben, in a most decided tone.

"How could he find it out?" said Gumble, musing, "some one must have betrayed us."

"Lord bless you, Sir!" cried the serviceable scoundrel, with a look of contemptuous pity, "you don't half know your man, that's clear. Why, there's nothing takes place from Charing-cross to the pump at Aldgate that he does not know of before it's done. Not a gentleman can go out of town in a moonlight night, whether it be on the outside of a horse, or the inside of a shay, but he contrives to get information of it somehow."

"But what for?" exclaimed Sir Theodore; "he must have some motive."

Ben Ploughshare now laughed aloud. — "Well," he exclaimed, "I thought every body knew who Colonel Lutwich is."

"I do. I have the pleasure of his acquaintance," answered the young baronet, somewhat haughtily.

"Well, if it's a pleasure that's more than many can say," answered the other; "but I'll tell you as much of it as I dare, Sir. Who's in that room there?"

"No one," answered Gamble. "Go on, and don't be afraid."

"You must know then, Sir," continued Ben, lowering his voice, "the colonel is, or was, a real colonel; and he

was rich, too, and his relations high people; but he was very extravagant, and used to play high, though they say he did not much care about it; and he used to bet high too: and one night, about three years ago, he lost more than he had in his pocket; people do say more than he had in his house; and the fellow he lost it to jeered him about it, and pretended to be afraid of not getting his money. So Lutwich said, 'Wait here for one hour, and you shall have it;' and sure enough he brought it; but that night the storekeeper of Portsmouth-yard was robbed of a thousand pound hard cash upon Wimbledon. Since then there have been plenty of stories, and they say he quite weighs his weight. I dare not say much more, for he's a terrible hand when he's angry; but all I know is, whether he does such tricks or not, nobody has ever been able to prove it against him, though he was once tried for his life, and has never been employed in the army since. He is so desperate 'cute. — I've heard say, however, that there is one could hang him if he liked; and I believe it."

"Who is that?" demanded Gamble, quickly.

"Why, Hanging-wood Billy, the swivel-eyed post-boy, who's been so long at the Woolpack at St. Alban's," said Ben; "he knows more of his ways than any one."

Sir Theodore Broughton rose, and walked up and down the room for a minute, in thought. Doctor Gamble eyed him attentively, and then went and spoke to him in a whisper. "Yes, yes, if it can be managed," replied the young

baronet, with his face lighting up with not the most pleasant fire.

"Here, Ben: there are two guineas for you," said the doctor; "and now, if you can bring Hanging-wood Billy here to speak with us for an hour, we will give five pounds to share between you."

The man nodded his head, pouched the money, and then, after a very few pithy inquiries, as to convenient hours, &c., left the room.

CHAPTER. V.

THE cottage was a very pretty one. England has always been famous for pretty cottages; indeed, it is the only country in the world which has such a thing, except, perhaps, Switzerland and some parts of the Tyrol. The French *chaumière* is as different from an English cottage as a Frenchwoman is from an Englishwoman. An Italian *capanna* does not give you the least idea of the thing, nor a *casarellina* either, nor any of the *inas* nor *ellas*. The Spanish *casilla*, *casita*, or *casica*, are all as far off, and the German *Hütte* is as bad. A pretty cottage is only to be found in England.

There is no doubt of it: we are naturally a democratic people in our tastes. Our kings have palaces built for them; and then they build cottages for themselves. However, the cottage of Mrs. Lisle was a very pretty cottage indeed, in that peculiar style which covers a very convenient house, intended for the residence of the wealthy and the luxurious, with the thatch of the peasant. The rooms were not very large, and not very lofty; but they were neither very small nor very low, and they were all beautifully proportioned and exceedingly neatly furnished. In fact, externally and internally, it had everything for comfort and nothing for ostentation; though Reginald, in moments of temporary repose, had taken care to do, externally at least, a great

deal for ornament, and had done it with a painter's eye. But I will not pause upon the pretty little lawn in front, separated from the smooth green fields beyond by a hawhaw; nor speak of the groups of old elms upon that lawn, so arranged, by lopping a branch here and there, as to frame a view of the hills; nor rest in the little verandah, with its rich climbing plants, keeping the eyes from the glare, without excluding the sunshine; but, on the contrary, I will proceed at once to the group within, consisting of five persons: three of them are already known to the reader, and therefore I will only deal with two.

That elderly lady in the widow's cap shall be the first: she has worn those weeds ever since a gallant husband's death, now fourteen or fifteen years ago. The hair, indeed, is not all concealed; but, gray nearly to silver, without powder, it is plainly braided upon the forehead. She seems fifty-three or four; but she is in reality less, not more than forty-eight; but cares and sorrows, strongly felt, have made years for her. She is tall, taller for a woman than her son for a man, and probably was once very graceful, for her form is still fine; and, though her movements are somewhat slow, yet there is a dignity in them, such as young graces, when they die, sometimes bequeath to age. Her brow is ever grave, but gentle, and the smile that comes upon her lip, even in her happiest moments, is faint, though very sweet. Such is the Honourable Mrs. Lisle.

The pale girl of two or three and twenty, seated at a little distance from Mrs. Lisle, with Kate Malcolm between

them, is her daughter; but — oh! what a contrast between that slight, delicate creature and her brother! He, browned and hardened by years of campaigning; powerful, though graceful in form, and upright, though not stiff; — she, light, slender, bending like a flower, and colourless as a snow-drop.

As nothing more than a glimpse of Mrs. Lisle will ever be given to the reader, I may as well say a few words of her character here, there being no opportunity of displaying it in her actions. Though gentle and kind, and enthusiastic by nature, she had a great deal of that firm and quick decision of character which characterized her brother, and which had given him so much power over old Sir Walter Broughton, whom no one had ever been able to manage but himself. Though plain and simple in her words, there was a great deal of imagination and rich fancy in her conversation, and the images by which she would illustrate her meaning seemed only the more striking from the simple language in which they were conveyed. She had long been in very delicate health, however; and the feebleness of the body was, in her case, a shackle upon her fancy.

She was now looking extremely grave, perhaps I might say, sad; and, indeed, she had some cause; for her son and Major Brandrum were just at the close of a parting visit, before they once more sailed for the far west. Only on the preceding day they had received their promotion and orders; but those orders were peremptory to proceed

to the St. Lawrence by a ship just about to sail, and the chaise was now expected at the door every moment.

For the last ten minutes, Major — or, as he should now be called, Colonel — Brandrum had been talking eagerly to his adopted child; and then, turning to Mrs. Lisle, he said, "To your charge, my dear lady, I leave her; and I know she will be well and happy with you; but, at the same time, as life is uncertain, and I may never see these shores again, I have been telling her that she will find in my agent's hands, whose address I have given her, all that is necessary to entitle her, in case I am shot, bayoneted, or scalped, to all the fragments which the service of my country and a reckless disposition have left me. Had I known I should ever have a daughter, Kate, I might have been more careful."

"But not less 'generous, Colonel," replied Mrs. Lisle. "Can you take away its smell from the rose, or its lustre from the diamond? But leave her with me in all security. Poor dove! she has found a cot at last, and under my wing she will be safe as long as God spare me."

"We will be sisters, Colonel Brandrum," said Louisa Lisle, in a low voice.

Kate was troubled about something. Either gratitude for the kindness she received, or pain at seeing her kind protector about to leave her so soon, or some other emotion, made her turn pale and red by turns; and at length, rising as if with a great effort, she said, addressing Major Brandrum,

"May I speak with you in the other room for a moment? I have something I wish to say."

But, even as she spoke, the grating sound of carriage wheels was heard; and a chaise, well loaded, with two servants on horseback behind, passed along the little drive before the windows, and drew up at the door.

"Good faith! my dear girl, if you have anything to tell, you must write it," replied Major Brandrum, pointing to the vehicle: "I would rather risk scalping than miss the vessel, and the fellow is now somewhat late. — Farewell, Mrs. Lisle. Louisa, little darling, fare you well."

"Colonel Lutwich, Madam," said a servant, throwing open the door, and Kate's cheek instantly glowed warmly.

"Who?" asked Mrs. Lisle.

"Lutwich," answered Major Brandrum: "an exceedingly good fellow, to whom Kate is under great obligations."

"Oh! I know — I have heard," said Mrs. Lisle. "I wish, however, it had been at another time. A stranger's presence, at a moment like this, is like frost chilling the last flowers of autumn."

The words were hardly uttered, when Lutwich was in the room. His first look, his first words were for Kate Malcolm; but then he turned to Lisle and Brandrum.

"I have heard of your good fortune," he said, shaking them warmly by the hand. "Are you away at once? Well, God speed you! Perhaps, Brandrum, it may not be long ere I follow. I have good hopes."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Brandrum; "then I do wish you joy."

"Yes, indeed," said Lutwich, "I have seen the commander-in-chief, besought pardon for past offences, promised order and obedience for the future; sold off my stud, my house in town, my wines, my carriages, as the first mark of sincerity; and henceforth I am a different man."

"That is good news indeed," answered Brandrum, grasping his hand. "Take my advice, Lutwich: get on foreign service at once. It will break through bad acquaintances."

"I have good hope of doing so," replied Lutwich; "and, as I said, I may come out and join you soon. But," he added, as his eyes turned to Kate's face again, and he saw that the colour had left her cheek, "I must not come alone, my good friend. I must have some one to take care of me, and to keep me in the right path."

"Now, Colonel," said Reginald Lisle, who had been standing with his mother's hand in his, "we must go in ed."

Another minute, the parting embrace was given, the farewell spoken, and the two officers were gone. Louisa went to the window, and watched the carriage roll away with streaming eyes. The dew was in Kate's, also, and one tear trickled down Mrs. Lisle's cheek.

Colonel Lutwich felt a little embarrassed; but his impulses were graceful always; and, approaching the lady of the house, he said, "I really beg pardon, Madam, for intruding upon you at this moment; and I would not protract

my visit now, but that I have a few questions to ask Miss Malcolm, which I must not defer, as I dine to-morrow with one to whom her answers will be of much interest. But I can speak with her in another room, if my presence is oppressive to you, as I am sure it must be."

"No, no, Colonel Lutwich," answered Mrs. Lisle, holding out her hand to him; "a mother must feel in parting with her son for the last time; but do not suppose I would keep my young falcon to the nest when nature teaches him to soar. I am a soldier's widow, my dear Sir, and know what are a soldier's duties."

"And appreciate what may be a soldier's renown," said Lutwich, sitting down beside her; "and believe me, my dear Madam, all affectionate hearts, when they part with those they love, feel those sad pictures of what may be, rise before them, which they are inclined to look upon as dark presentiments. Lisle goes to gain glory and honour as he has done before, and doubt not that Heaven in its goodness will send him back to your arms safe, happy, and prosperous. But I will not intrude upon you long."

"Nay," said Mrs. Lisle, "I must not let you think me inhospitable. We shall soon have tea, and as Reginald's friend, it will give me sincere pleasure if you will stay and partake of it — indeed it will be better for me — better for us all; for your society will keep us from gloomy thoughts. When there are black clouds overhead we naturally think there will be a storm."

"Which the wind often wafts far away," said Lutwich; and for a few minutes more he continued to converse cheerfully, but not gaily, with the elder lady, who was evidently pleased with his conversation and demeanour. Kate and Louisa Lisle soon joined in; and in pleasant easy talk, if they did not forget the pain they had just experienced, the most poignant sting was lost.

Tea was brought, evening began to fall, and yet Colonel Lutwich's questions had not been propounded. At length, however, Mrs. Lisle reminded him of them, and he asked, with a smile, "Are you ready for a cross-examination, dear Miss Malcolm?"

"If it be not a very severe one," answered Kate, timidly.

"You may stay it when you please," said her lover; "first, then, I think you told me that you had a relation in Yorkshire of the name of Eaton."

Kate bowed her head, and he went on. "Is his name Charles, or William Eaton?"

"William," she answered.

"It is very strange!" said Lutwich, in a thoughtful tone; "did you not say he was your mother's nephew?"

"Yes," replied Kate, in some surprise, "he was her sister's son. But what is it is strange?"

"That he should deny the relationship," replied Lutwich; "he must be a gross liar."

Kate's cheek was glowing very warmly. "Stay, stay," she said, "I have his letter — I look at it often to see

the contrast between his cold selfishness and the noble generosity of others — I will bring it this moment — He signs himself my cousin;" and rising, she ran hastily to her room, and returned in a few minutes with the letter.

"There," she said, putting it into Colonel Lutwich's hands.

He read it through, with a frowning brow; and then said, "I wish I had had it with me. This man had the impudence to deny, in the most distinct manner, that he ever had an aunt of the name of Malcolm."

For an instant Kate seemed confounded; but then a look of sudden intelligence spread over her face, succeeded by an expression of scorn. "He has not lied with you," she said, "but only equivocated. I now remember, my mother never took the name of Malcolm. She was dead before the small property was left to my father, upon condition of taking that name, which, in the end, by the lawsuit it entailed, proved his complete ruin. My mother always bore the name of Marsham, which was my father's at the time of their marriage; but that cannot excuse Mr. Eaton, for he must have known as well as I do, whom you meant."

"It is all right," said Lutwich, with a look of grave joy, "it is all right — Marsham was your mother's name first."

"No," said Kate; "her unmarried name was Carr. Marsham was my father's name before he took that of Malcolm."

"Carr — that is right too," exclaimed Lutwich, and then he fell into thought, and fixed his eyes vacantly upon a spot in the carpet.

"But now tell me," said Kate, after giving him time enough to meditate — for there is no view from which a man likes so little to be recalled, as that which presents itself when his eyes are upon his own thoughts — "but now tell me what has made you ask me all these questions? Is it merely because Mr. Eaton disowned his poor cousin?"

"No, no, dear Kate," said Lutwich, forgetting the presence of others. "I had a strong motive — I will not tell you now; but you may hear hereafter — perhaps to-morrow. You shall hear at all events from me, if not from another. I know not," he continued, rising and taking her hand, while he gazed into her eyes, "I know not whether what I am doing — what I have been doing — what I shall do — may not be directly opposed to my own interests; but I have not forgotten a lesson you gave me one night in regard to candour and frankness, and I will act up to it — to the very letter, my dear instructress. I think another has a first right to the information I have obtained; but yours is the next, and you shall have it. I must now, however, leave you, for it is growing late, and —"

"Good Heaven! there is a man looking in at the window," cried Louisa Lisle.

Lutwich instantly turned his eyes in the direction of the casement, and clearly saw a figure retreating through the darkness without. "You had better ring and order the

shutters to be closed," he said; "I will stay till it is done."

Mrs. Lisle, who had been gazing towards the window too, put out her hand to ring the bell; but before she had pulled the rope, another bell was heard, and then a considerable noise in the little vestibule. The next instant the door burst open; and two men entered the room. Lutwich turned deadly pale.

The first who appeared was a powerful fellow of about five foot eleven, well dressed, as a man of the middle station. The second was shorter, and amazingly broad over the shoulders; but it was the first who spoke, and that in a civil though somewhat stern tone. "Sorry to trouble you just now, colonel," he said, "but we want you."

Lutwich bowed his head significantly, calm and composed, though very grave, and with a face still pale. "I will come with you at once," he said. "Good-bye, Mrs. Lisle, Kate—"

But while he was speaking, the second man, who had been diving with his hand into his large pockets, produced a pair of thick, shining, iron rings, screwed together in the midst, and said aloud, "I suppose you 'll have the cuffs on him, Master Williams?"

"Good Heaven!" cried Mrs. Lisle, "they are handcuffs!"

Lutwich's face turned now as red as fire, and he seemed as if he were about to start forward, and knock the man

down; but Kate sprang to his side, and caught his arm, exclaiming, "Oh! what is it — what is the matter, Henry?"

"Why, the matter is, Ma'am, that we have a warrant against the colonel, for robbery on the king's highway," said the first officer; "but, as he is quite a gentleman, and seems likely to come, without giving any trouble, I'm not inclinable to put the darbies on him, or the cuffs either, till I'm told."

Kate put her hand to her head, and then burst into a violent flood of tears.

"This must surely be some mistake!" cried Mrs. Lisle, greatly agitated. "Colonel Lutwich, explain to the men who you are!"

"It is of no use, my dear Madam," said Lutwich. "They know who I am quite well. This charge has been brought once before."

"No, not just the same, colonel," replied the officer: "this is for stopping Ned Warwick, the sheriff's officer, and his bum. T'other was for robbing Mr. Sheepshanks, the broker. You're overweight now, colonel, I am afeerd. But, come — you had better jog at once. The women will blubber a bit, you know."

"Go on, Sir," said Lutwich; "I come with you;" and he seemed about to follow; but Kate caught his hand, exclaiming, "Oh, Henry, where are they going to take you? Write to me — tell me all. — It must be false — say it is false."

Lutwich bent his head, and kissed her cheek; but the only words he uttered, were, "I will write, dear Kate — I will write, to-morrow;" and he hurried out of the room, with the two officers.

Louisa took Kate's hand, and led her back to the sofa; but the poor girl was utterly overwhelmed and bewildered with grief. She felt now, for the first time, how deeply she could love, and how love could triumph over every other sensation. She longed to follow Lutwich, to share his prison, to soothe, to comfort him; to assure him that she believed not a word of the accusation brought against him; that she was sure it was false; that it could not be true; that he who could act so nobly, so generously by her, could be guilty of no crime. But strength of body and of mind had failed her for the moment, and she sat, with the tears running rapidly down her cheeks, and her lips murmuring, "It is impossible! It is impossible!"

Mrs. Lisle, too, was greatly agitated and shocked; and she remained silent, with her hands pressed upon her eyes. But at length she made an effort; and, sitting down by her young guest, she said, in a gentle and kindly tone, "Be comforted, Kate; I, too, think it impossible — quite impossible, that the friend of my son should be guilty of any crime. Compose yourself, my love. Let us wait till to-morrow, and hear what comes of this. It is perhaps a charge to extort money."

But while she was proceeding thus, and while Kate was still weeping bitterly, Louisa Lisle approached her mother's

side, saying, softly, "You, too, mama, be calm. You are too much agitated. Your face is pale: your lips are blue. You know what Doctor Grant said: you will make yourself ill. Let me bring you some of the drops."

But Mrs. Lisle waved her hand; and Kate instantly lifted her head, and wiped her eyes, saying, while she gazed in her kind hostess's face, "I will weep no more: I will be calm. Forgive me, dear Mrs. Lisle. I was selfish in my sorrow — I will be quite calm."

She might be so externally; and, indeed, to a certain degree, she was so during the rest of the short summer evening; but no one could tell how fearfully she was agitated within.

The afternoon came to an end; and Mrs. Lisle rose early, to retire to rest. Kate and Louisa followed her closely. When she had reached the top of the steps, something seemed suddenly to strike her; and, turning to Louisa, she said, quickly, and in an eager manner, "Louisa, my love, I for —"

But the sentence remained unconcluded; and will do so for ever. As she spoke, Mrs. Lisle fell back, and was caught, partly by her daughter, partly by Kate Malcolm.

Louisa called aloud for help; the man-servant, who was in the vestibule below, ran up, and, with his assistance, Mrs. Lisle was carried into her own room, and laid upon her bed.

"Run, run for Doctor Slater!" cried Louisa Lisle, "quick as lightning, Groves."

Kate brought water, and sprinkled the cold face. There was a slight movement of the muscles round the lips, and then all was still. The maids were summoned, and various remedies tried, till the surgeon came; but none were the least effectual in breaking that heavy sleep. When he did come, he tried none; but put his hand upon the wrist, watched the face for a moment, and then took Louisa's hand, saying, solemnly, "She is at peace."

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CHAPTER VI.

WHEN the United States of America have accomplished the great destiny that is before them — when civilization and prosperity in its train have emigrated completely to the West — when the seeds of inevitable decay, which are planted in the foundation of all states and empires, have spread, like the lichen and the moss, over all that we are proud of in this land, and when the citizens of the greatest republic, or the subjects of the greatest empire (as the case may then be) that the world ever saw, cross the Atlantic to view, as travellers, the half desolate country from which their fathers sprang, how many objects of interest and inquiry will present themselves to their eyes!

I see some readers smile, and others laugh; and both in proud scorn. They will find a thousand reasons why the vain anticipation of permanent power and pre-eminence should not be disappointed in the English people, though it has been so with every other nation. They will say, "We are Christians, free, orderly, ingenious, energetic: there are a thousand qualities in us, a thousand accidents in our condition, a thousand opportunities in our position, which none of the fallen nations have ever possessed."

True, but the march of events is sure, the law of nature invariable; there is nothing which it does not affect,

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nothing which can do more than delay its progress for a few short years. Decay is in everything, and as certainly follows complete development as old age follows manhood. The walls of Babylon, the towers of Nineveh, the monuments of Rome, the temples and the citadels of Greece, are witnesses against us; and neither freedom, nor arts, nor arms, nor energies, can save us from the fate of all earthly things. The follies or wisdom of princes and people; the faults or the excellence of statesmen and legislators, may retard or hasten, by a century or two, the period of the fall; but nations shall die as individuals, and the land they inhabited become their tomb.

When such is the case with England, there may, perhaps, be for future generations more important and more interesting fragments left than have been bequeathed to posterity by any other nation. France will leave little or nothing but a history of blood or tyranny, the shocks of alternate anarchy and servitude.

Nevertheless, in many of her social relations, how poor and pitiful will England appear! how narrow, how material will the notions of her people seem! how little expansion of soul and feeling will be found amongst the records of her society! Her great and her good men maltreated or neglected; powers of mind and nobility of heart considered the lowest of claims upon public estimation or gratitude; the recompense of merit dependent upon party spirit, and the road to success only open to material exertion. The

splendid exceptions to the general tone of the whole nation will only prove more painfully the general rule.

One point in the history of the people which will probably excite great attention hereafter, is the enormous and extraordinary advance in civilization, if not in elevation, made in the society of England during the last fifty or sixty years. The wonderful progress during that period — to a part of which at least we have ourselves been witnesses — is without parallel in the history of nations; and if we take up a book of the times immediately antecedent — whether it be the private diary of an individual, or his collected letters, or one of those works which, though the narrative be fictitious, profess to paint the manners of the day — we shall be more startled by the contrast between our days and those, than between the present and some centuries ago.

Amongst the abominations which have been swept away, a mass of the most foul and loathsome existed in our prisons, the miseries of which, and some of the crimes of those under whose rule they were, have been exposed by the immortal Howard. But the vices practised within those gloomy walls, the revelry, the debauchery, the iniquity which reigned side by side with famine, pestilence, and death, can only be gleaned by scattered anecdotes, or by the glimpses given of those mansions of sin and despair, by those who had known and escaped from their baneful atmosphere.

Let the reader picture to himself one ward crammed to suffocation, with wretches dying of a fever so pestilential, that when a few of them, just able to stand in the dock, have been brought into court for trial, the disease has spread to every one around — judge, jurors, officers, spectators — and in the next ward, the ringing shouts of wild and drunken revelry, or the more secret orgies of a darker licentiousness. Then let him look at the miserable man committed for some unprofitable crime, without money to fee a mercenary gaoler, or to procure necessary food, pining and wasting upon bread and water, and then turn his eyes to the wealthy prisoner lodged in the governor's house, treated with all reverence, living on delicacies, and freely tipping his champagne. Or take them altogether, meeting in promiscuous groups, men and women, boys and young girls, the hardened felon, the repentant novice, the man to whom the load of crime has become easy by habit, and the bewildered innocent overwhelmed by a false accusation. No limit but a gaoler's caprice was placed upon the persons admitted to see the prisoners. Rules and regulations might exist, but were totally neglected. Everything for which they might please to pay toll was admitted, whether the strong stimulant to drive away thought in drunkenness, or the means of effecting an escape, or those of perverting the course of justice. The turnkeys themselves were in league with the "Old Bailey witnesses," and many a successful defence has been made up, for a criminal who could afford to pay, between the gaoler who had him in charge

and the "man with the straw in his shoe," who saved him from the gallows by direct perjury.

Such things have passed away; but such things have been, and they existed in full force at the time when Colonel Lutwich was carried as a prisoner to one of the many gaols which then existed in or near London. It was dark, as I have said, when he was apprehended, and as the distance was considerable, it was nearly twelve o'clock before he had passed the gloomy gates where he was to await examination and trial; but the governor of the prison was himself up, and the sounds of laughter and singing announced that some of the prisoners were likewise awake.

With profound respect and attention, the governor received so distinguished a captive, and lighted him into his own parlour with a candle, which he had brought out when the great bell rang.

"How do you do, colonel?" he said; "I hope your honour is quite well. It is two years since I have had the pleasure of seeing you — you will, of course, like a room to yourself. We have got one quite ready for you."

"Did you expect me?" asked Lutwich, gazing in his face.

"Oh dear, yes, Sir," replied the governor; "we have been expecting you all the morning."

"Then, I think the officers might have been civil enough," said Lutwich, "to execute their warrant more privately. I have been at my own house, and in that neighbourhood

all the afternoon — I shall, of course, like to have a room to myself, Sir; but I require nothing extraordinary or extravagant.”

The gaoler's face fell a little, for in those days the custody of an extravagant prisoner was a privilege of some value, and he began to think that Lutwich must have exhausted his means. It was not an unreasonable supposition either; for in days of “trading justices,” it was rarely a culprit found his way to the gallows till the greater part of his funds had been expended in purchasing immunity. He murmured something then about “persons paying for accommodation,” but the prisoner took him up sharply, saying, “There, there! Do not make yourself uneasy, my good Sir. I know your customs, and have plenty of means to agree with them all. I am richer, perhaps, than ever I have been, and shall, as before, require the best of everything. There,” he continued, taking out his purse, “there are five guineas for my garnish as you call it. Now, show me my room — I would rather have two if possible, for I do not like to sit where I sleep.”

“Certainly, colonel, certainly,” replied the gaoler, with his mind relieved. “You can have two. One we will make into a sitting-room for you to-morrow. It has a bed in it just now, but that will soon be taken out. This way, Sir. I suppose you will like to have a servant, too. There 's a nice room for him at the lodge.”

“Yes,” said Lutwich, thoughtfully, “I will send for one to-morrow;” and he followed the head gaoler, with

a turnkey at his heels, to the apartments destined for him.

"These two, colonel, with the room at the lodge for your man, will be ten guineas a week, you know," said the head Cerberus after Lutwich had stood in the midst gazing round for a minute or two.

"Very well," replied the prisoner, paying the money in advance, as usual in such cases; and then again he fell into thought.

"Can I do anything further to serve you, colonel?" inquired the head gaoler.

"Yes," answered Lutwich, abruptly: "pen, ink, and paper; some supper, and your best wine."

"Can I send for your dressing things?" was the next question; but the prisoner waved his hand impatiently, saying, "No, no; it is too far. I have sold off my house and goods in London, my good friend, realizing thereby, what with horses and plate, near seven thousand pounds."

He paused, for an idea passed through his mind of tempting the man's fidelity in order to effect his escape; but the gaoler answered him with a smile, "What, Sir, I suppose you intended to quit the road and take another line. Ay, that's the reason they nabbed you. They never let a gentleman do that. They give him his swing as long as he keeps to business. It's the only trade from which a man can never retire."

"Too true!" said Lutwich, with a sigh; "and yet, methinks, every vice is the same. 'T is like climbing a pre-

cipice, my good friend. The road up may be accomplished with that fiery pleasure which ever accompanies danger surmounted, if we look not down below us in the ascent; but the moment we try to turn back, we break our necks. Is this God's ordinance or man's?"

"The devil's, Sir, I should think," replied his companion, "for he gains by it."

"And the gaoler," added Lutwich, with a bitter laugh. "Well, well, let me have the things I asked for, and good-night."

"Good-night, Sir," said the gaoler, and withdrew, securing the door behind him.

Lutwich was left alone; and, oh, what language can describe the emotions which then took possession of him — the anguish of heart and spirit! None but his own. After gazing full ten minutes on the floor, as he stood like marble in the midst of the small room, he repeated one word several times with a groan, "Blighted, blighted, blighted!" he said — "all blighted!"

They were hopes, expectations, purposes, he spoke of; the dreams of love and tenderness, and reformation, and honour, and self-respect, and even domestic peace — all blighted, blighted! There seemed nothing else but blight over the whole world for him; and that which rendered the common agony of disappointed hope and love frustrated and despair confirmed, doubly agonizing, was the thought that he had worked the ruin of his own futurity; that in the wild insane fury of many mingled passions, he had cut

down the fruit-bearing tree of life; uprooted, harrowed over, and sown with salt the field of earth's expectations, and left nothing for the heart to long for but the peace of death — the slumber of the grave.

Such were the first dark fearful thoughts which crowded upon him as he stood there alone. They lasted even while the gaoler brought in his supper and the wine, the materials for writing, wax-lights, and all that could render a prison luxurious — even while the man spoke to him, and he answered; for there is a mechanical part of man, which goes through its functions while the will is far away.

Then when the heavy door was finally locked and bolted for the night, he sat himself down and pondered. At first all was blank darkness — a night without a star; but gradually a pale faint gleam, the dawn of hope's renewed day, began to rise into a doubtful twilight.

"Will she love me still?" he asked himself. "I have heard of woman's deep devotion unto death, despising shame, insult, scorn; enduring even while it condemns, and clinging to the criminal even while it abhors the crime. If ever there was a being who could so love, methinks she is the one. I will write to her. I will try her. If her love still conquers, there is yet something to live for; something to struggle for. It is very strange, when I had no such feelings in my breast — when the light pleasures of the world, the follies, the vanities, the vices of this earth engrossed, though with empty levity, every thought, I never judged life unworthy of an effort, I was prepared to strive and

combat to the last; and now, when higher objects have been placed before my view, and nobler purposes animated me, I feel cast down at the first check, dispirited and despairing while there is many a chance yet left. I will write to her; I will seek some object in living — ay, or perhaps some consolation in death.”

He seated himself at the table, he took the paper and the pen, but innumerable difficulties presented themselves at the outset. He tried to think over what he would say, but he got impatient with thought; and murmuring, “Let the heart speak,” he wrote: —

“In the midst of anguish (I had almost said despair), I turn to my only remaining hope for one gleam of comfort. By letter I can explain nothing, account for nothing; and yet, how dare I venture to ask you to visit me in a prison? What excuse can I frame for such a request except the impossibility of going forth to see you? There are heavy walls around me, bars upon my windows, locks and bolts upon the door. Yet I have much to say to you, Kate — my own Kate. Well may I call you so; for your spirit had infused into mine a new life, your love had become the star to guide me to right and honour, the hope of your approbation had become the beacon which was leading me onward to all that was good and high. A cloud has come over it for a time, a mist has obscured it: you only can make the light blaze up again. Come to me, then, for a few short minutes, if you still can love me. Give me counsel, give me hope, give me strength. I have

some tidings also to give you; but that is nothing to the purpose: I can write them hereafter, if affection, if charity, if the memory of all you have bestowed upon him, does not induce you to accede to this request — perhaps the last — of

“Yours till death,

“HENRY LUTWICH.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE reader has perceived that somewhat more than a fortnight had passed since the day on which Major Brandrum and Reginald Lisle had met Sir Theodore Broughton and his friend Frederick Fitzgerald, Esquire — better known by the name of "Fighting Freddy Fitzgerald" — and had been interrupted in their hostile purposes by the opportune arrival of Doctor Gamble and Captain Donovan. The history of one of the antagonist parties is sufficiently known, but that of the other has ceased since we left him with Doctor Gamble at his inn, after an interesting conversation with that admirable person Ben Ploughshare. It is therefore absolutely necessary to take up again the thread of Sir Theodore's personal story, although I shall sketch it but lightly, from various considerations.

In the first place, let me say that he found the friendship of Mr. Fitzgerald somewhat more difficult to get rid of than to acquire. In a case of emergency, such as the affair between himself and Major Brandrum, Sir Theodore naturally clung to the person who first offered him assistance; but, at the same time, he was clear-sighted enough to see that his new found friend was rather more ready with pistol or small sword than even the evil customs of a society such as ours — mingling in strange compound, barbarism and civili-

zation — required. All that Fitzgerald seemed to desire or aim at in the whole business, was that Sir Theodore should shoot Major Brandrum, or Major Brandrum should shoot Sir Theodore; and, apparently, he did not much care which consummation was arrived at. Do not let the reader suppose, however, that he had any personal feeling in the matter, for such was not the case. He was actuated by a pure disinterested love of bloodshed, and acted quite philanthropically upon a thorough conviction that it is best, in the abstract, for mankind, that when two human beings quarrel one of them should be shot or run through the body. We have not quite got rid of this sort of philosophy yet; but it certainly is not as popular as it was.

However, as he could not have his fill of fighting or seeing fought, he thought he might quite as well have his fill of those good things which usually graced the table of the young baronet, and the very same day he presented himself, a few minutes before the usual dinner hour, to talk over the occurrences of the morning. As the table-cloth was already laid, Sir Theodore, notwithstanding a grimace on the part of Doctor Gamble, thought he could not do less than ask his volunteer second to dinner; and Mr. Fitzgerald was soon seated at the well served board. Doctor Gamble he treated with undisguised contempt, as one of the uncombative portion of the community; but to Sir Theodore he showed great respect, both from the pugnacious qualities he had exhibited, and from a sense of the excellence of soup, fish, poultry, and other bounties

of nature. After having taken a sufficient portion of wine too, and when Doctor Gamble had quitted the room for a few minutes, his regard for Sir Theodore rose to such a pitch of enthusiasm that he offered his best services once more to find out Major Brandrum and give him cogent reasons for gratifying Sir Theodore by another meeting; undertaking to manage the whole matter in such a delicate and skilful way as to avoid all chance of a second interruption. He seemed, indeed, to believe that Sir Theodore must necessarily look upon this as the greatest possible favour, and the young gentleman was somewhat embarrassed as to how he should make him comprehend that his taste for such morning exercises was less than his own. Perhaps the very attempt which he made to do so might have forfeited Mr. Fitzgerald's friendship; had not the table and the wine rendered it very adhesive.

The young baronet, however, felt somewhat anxious to get rid of him, and not a little annoyed at the protracted absence of Gamble, which left him to the tender mercies of this gentleman. At length the doctor reappeared, and a minute or two after a waiter entered and informed Mr. Fitzgerald that somebody wished to speak with him. With a look of some alarm he went out, taking hat and cane with him; but he did not appear again, and only sent his compliments to Sir Theodore, with an intimation he would call upon him another day.

"Rather droll!" said Sir Theodore; "what can be the meaning of this, doctor?"

"Only a friendly hint from 'a Bow-street officer," replied Gamble, drily; "the man is a pest, and must be got rid of, my young friend. Life is a pleasant thing, depend upon it; and it was made for other occupations than fighting. Come, let us away to Vauxhall; you will find better amusement there than my master Fitzgerald, would provide for you."

Sir Theodore Broughton, to say the truth, was not at all sorry to be disembarassed of the presence of his dearly beloved second, although he did not much like the manner in which it had been effected. Nevertheless, the memory of being very heartily horsewhipped rankled much more in his mind than in that of worthy Doctor Gamble. Perhaps it might be that he was less accustomed to the operation; but, as not unfrequently happens, a great portion of his resentment was transferred from his immediate castigator to the person whom he supposed to have suggested the castigation, or, at all events, to him who had been, to all appearance, the proximate cause thereof. Major Brandrum he hated much, but Colonel Lutwich more; and although the somewhat sullen and reserved character of his mind made his spontaneous communications, even with Doctor Gamble, somewhat niggardly, yet more than once the feelings fermenting within found voice in a few brief sentences soon interrupted, which served the good tutor as a foundation for longer replies, and as a means of drawing forth more of the secret feelings of his pupil's heart.

As they were on their way to Vauxhall — after an in-

terval of silence, during which Sir Theodore seemed to be busy in looking at the buildings and lights that they passed — he broke forth abruptly, showing what was really the matter of his thoughts.

“I cannot help thinking, doctor,” he said, “that fellow Lutwich must have overheard what we were talking about that morning in my room. There was somebody sleeping just next door, and the partition must have been thin, for I heard whoever it was moving about after I was in bed.”

“It is very likely,” replied Gamble, “I cannot conceive how he could find out any other way, for we let Hargrave know so little that he could not betray you. But what do you intend to do, when you have talked to this post-boy? If he peaches of Lutwich it will be no good to you. Unless —”

“I ’ll hang him if I can,” replied the other, gloomily. “What business had he to meddle with my affairs? If I cannot hang him for that, I ’ll hang him for something else, if I can.”

“Perhaps he is in love with the girl himself,” said Doctor Gamble, looking at Sir Theodore by the light of a globe lamp, which was shining into the carriage.

The young baronet gave a sudden start as if something pained him; but he remained silent for several minutes, till at length Doctor Gamble continued, “I am almost inclined to think, Sir Theodore, that it would be better for you to give the whole thing up. You may find more dif-

difficulties in the way than you or I see. This girl is well protected, and —”

An impatient exclamation from the young baronet stopped him, and Sir Theodore replied, “I tell you, difficulties shall not prevent me. I believe what you say is true — he is in love with her. I remember how he took her part at Dunstable — I never thought of it before; and she is in love with him, perhaps.”

He paused for a moment or two in gloomy silence, and then asked, “What did you mean by saying ‘unless’ just now, and then stopping short?”

“Why, I only meant that I did not see, after all, what good your having anything to do with this post-boy, this Hanging-wood Billy, can do, unless you could, some way or another, make it serviceable to your soft suit and pursuit of pretty Kate Malcolm.”

“Perhaps I may,” replied Sir Theodore, “perhaps I may; but, at all events, doctor, I can make it turn to the punishment of the scoundrel Lutwich himself.”

“He will never know that it was you who punished him,” said Gamble, and he was going on to add something more when the young baronet interrupted him by exclaiming, “Yes, he shall, by —!”

“What I was going to say,” continued the tutor, “is only this, my dear young friend. If you can turn any information you can gain to advantage in winning the lady, why well; but if not, I would not meddle with the poor devil. It will do you no good to hang him.”

Sir Theodore Broughton. II.

"You are mighty forgiving," said the young man, with a sneer; "but perhaps I may turn it to advantage."

"I do not think it," said Doctor Gamble; "she may have a liking for the man; but it is not very probable that she would become your mistress to save his life. If it were marriage you offered her, the case might be different. Few women care much whom they marry, so they marry some one able to keep them well."

"Then I *will* marry her," replied Sir Theodore sharply.

That was a consummation which Doctor Gamble had not expected, and did not at all desire. To be a tutor to a married man was not altogether the office that would suit him, even if it had been by any means usual, and during the remainder of the drive to Vauxhall he revolved in his mind the various points of his own situation, and that of Sir Theodore, which bore upon the question at issue. He judged his pupil's character very accurately, and knew that to oppose him was but to strengthen his resolution, and to lose his own influence. On the other hand, to aid and abet a scheme which might bring about a marriage with Kate Malcolm would instantly produce his dismissal by Captain Donovan. To pursue the baser purposes with which he and his pupil had set out towards her, he was now convinced would be fruitless, protected as she was by many persons of power, character, and knowledge of the world; for it must be recollected that, at this time, Kate was still under the care of Lady Chevenix, and that

both Major Brandrum and Captain Lisle were still in Great Britain.

Doctor Gamble was much embarrassed; and the only plan he could devise was, to lead Sir Theodore away from this passion by plunging him as deeply as possible, not only into the gaieties but also into the debaucheries of the metropolis. "He is young," thought Gamble, "inexperienced, full of passions, and there are plenty of nymphs to be found who, with a little teaching, will tie him to their apron-strings for a month or two."

I must not trace his meditations farther, nor even attempt to paint what followed during the next week. Suffice it to say, that Sir Theodore Broughton was initiated very rapidly into the various mysteries of dissipation with which London then, as now, abounded; and that, by excesses and late hours, the florid hue of health disappeared from his countenance, while weariness and feebleness took possession of his limbs. Doctor Gamble himself became somewhat alarmed at the proficiency which his pupil had attained in vice; but he consoled himself with the fallacious belief that his "boy's passion," as the tutor called it, for Kate Malcolm had altogether died away.

For a moment I must pause to look into the mind of the young man himself; for what was passing there is not without its interest. What, then, were the feelings of Sir Theodore Broughton, when, at the end of about eight days, he lay for more than half an hour after waking, heated, feverish, irritable, but too tired and enfeebled to rise with

the elasticity of youth, and the eagerness for fresh enjoyment which he had experienced so short a time before. He was sick of himself, disgusted with his own acts, seeming degraded and contemptible in his own eyes. So much at least of the knowledge of right and wrong remained, and had there been any one near him, whom he could have respected, to give counsel and warning, perhaps a change to better things might have been effected.

I say, perhaps, for I will own that it was very doubtful.

There were no resolutions, founded upon any right principle, for the wise or the good to strengthen. He determined indeed to change his course to a certain degree; but the motive was all selfish. He resolved to be more moderate; but simply because he felt that excesses weakened and injured him. He never thought of abstaining, he never accused himself of vice, or dreamed of penitence or proposed reformation; and far, very far from his mind was that forgetfulness of his purposes, which Doctor Gamble attributed to him. In the midst of all the wild scenes of profligacy into which he had plunged, he had often wondered why the St. Albans post-boy had never appeared, and had revolved in his meditations many a scheme for seeking his objects without confiding in his worthless tutor. But in all his plans the assistance of Gamble seemed needful. He did not even know where to find the man, Ben Ploughshare, without his aid. In this difficulty he applied to one not less base than the other; but Hargrave had turned some-

what sullen and restive, and it was with considerable trouble that Sir Theodore got him to speak at all.

"Why, Sir, I do not like to be blamed when I do my best to please you," said the man, "and as Doctor Gamble has taken all your affairs into his hands, I would rather you asked him anything you want to know. Heaven forbid that I should be accused of trying to mislead you! We are all weak, sinful creatures, and apt to fall when we work by our own light. Perhaps I was very wrong in what I did, wishing to please an earthly, rather than a heavenly master; but if I was wrong, Doctor Gamble was worse; and I don't think he served you a bit better either."

His hypocrisy was now even more disgusting to Sir Theodore than Gamble's barefaced licentiousness, and he was about to dismiss him from his presence sharply, when Hargrave threw in a word or two which changed the aspect of affairs. "Of course, you know where the young lady is, Sir," he said, after a moment's pause. Sir Theodore instantly caught at his words, saying, "No, where is she?"

The man made new difficulties, and affected to be half afraid to tell his secret; but at length Sir Theodore extracted from him an account of his having met with old Joseph, Colonel Lutwich's servant, and learned from him that Miss Malcolm was now at the house of Captain Lisle's mother. He saw his master's eyes kindle as he spoke, and with a degree of malicious satisfaction, he added, "She is to remain there, I hear, Sir, till she is married to Colonel Lutwich."

It cost the young baronet a great effort to hide the emotion he felt; but he did so, even from the keen eyes of the hypocrite before him, and in farther conversation he elicited that Captain Lisle and Major Brandrum were both absent from London, and that Lutwich himself had gone down into Yorkshire some days before.

The tumult of wild wishes and vague plans, which succeeded in the mind of Sir Theodore, when the man had left the room, is indescribable; but, after more than half an hour spent in troubled thought, he came to the unpalatable conclusion that he could do nothing without the assistance of this tutor.

"I must speak with him," he thought; "but I must teach him that I will have my own way, and that if he tries now to rule me by cunning, as he once ruled me by force, he will find himself mistaken, and have cause to rue it."

To his surprise, however, he found Gamble all compliance and frankness. "I have wished you, my dear Sir Theodore," said the tutor, "to get over this passion, but if that is not to be done we cannot help it. There is only one stipulation I must make, namely, I will have nothing to do with a *real* marriage. At your age, such a thing is most inexpedient; it would subject me to the high indignation of your guardian, you would repent it yourself before twelve months were passed, and would reproach me for aiding you. In anything else, you have nothing to do but to command me."

He had taken care to lay great stress upon the word "real," and his pupil did not fail to remark it, and ask an explanation. That explanation was soon given; and when Doctor Gamble saw a smile, a little cynical indeed, but still expressive of satisfaction, come upon the hearer's face, he rose gaily from his chair, adding, — "And now, Sir Theodore, let us order the horses and take a ride to St. Albans. Country air and new pursuits will do you good, for, to say truth, I think you have, as the sailors say, carried a little too much sail, for one so young. I have not opposed you, because I think there is a great deal of true philosophy in the practice of the confectioners, who, when they have a new apprentice, suffer him to eat as much of their confectionary as ever he pleases, quite certain that a surfeit is the best lesson of moderation."

Sir Theodore was not well pleased at all with the illustration; but he made no reply, and the horses were ordered.

CHAPTER VIII.

FEW scenes upon the stage, and only one group in marble — I mean the famous one of the Niobe — could give, or have given, so beautiful a picture of deep grief as that presented by the two lovely girls whom Mrs. Lisle had left so suddenly, when the surgeon pronounced the words, "She is at peace!" Louisa drew back suddenly, and gazed in his face, confounded with terror, while Kate drew closer to her bereaved friend, and clasped her arm with her beautiful fingers, as if she feared that the orphan would fall. The one always pale, was now white as alabaster; and though with the other some colour remained in her cheek, it had faded till it was but like the faint blush in the inside of one of those small Indian shells. Both were silent; and the fine line of the features took that slight but all-changing alteration which, by the least possible variation of the forms, can convert at once the expression of joy into that of sorrow or despair.

"Oh, no, no!" cried Louisa, at length; "do not, do not say it — she is not, she cannot be gone — she is but fainting."

The surgeon shook his head sorrowfully, and then gently tried to lead the poor girl from the room; but with eager vehemence she rushed back, cast her arms round her

mother's body, and wept profusely. The cheek against which her own rested was already as cold as marble; no breath waved her light hair; and Louisa Lisle felt that the surgeon's words were but too true, and that she was motherless.

"You had better lead her away," said the surgeon, speaking in a low tone to Kate; "it seems to have taken her completely by surprise. I wonder Mrs. Lisle did not in some degree prepare her for such an event."

"Was it to be expected, then?" asked Kate, wiping the tears from her own eyes.

"Assuredly," replied the surgeon; "she has had disease of the heart for some years, and was well aware that she would die suddenly, if much excited or distressed at any time."

"And to-night she was both," said Kate, with a sigh. "My sad fate strikes all who are kind to me."

"Induce her to come away," said the surgeon. But Kate could not make the effort; she remembered what she herself had felt; she knew that such tears are the heart's best relief. An old servant of the family, however, advanced to her young lady's side, and taking her arm, whispered, "Come, Miss Louisa, come! You will have to send after your brother; and there is no time to be lost."

It was a happy thought; Louisa Lisle started up from the bed, pushed back the hair from her face, and said somewhat wildly, "So I must — so I must. Oh, Kate!" and she cast herself upon her young friend's bosom.

Gently leading, and partly supporting her, Kate Malcolm drew her from the chamber of death, and into a room on the other side of the landing-place, the surgeon and the old servant following.

The man of healing would fain have had her take some restorative, but she answered, "No, no — I shall be better soon, Mr. Slater. Oh, Kate! I cannot write to him; write a few lines for me to Reginald, and send it off to Bristol. They may still be caught. Oh, dear Kate, I can feel for you more truly now. Will you write?"

"Certainly," replied Miss Malcolm. But the surgeon interposed, saying, "Perhaps I had better do it; and to your uncle, too. He is in Warwickshire, I think?"

"Yes," replied Louisa, bending her head; "but first to Reginald. He is just about to sail for America."

"I will not lose a moment," said the surgeon. And having procured pen, ink, and paper, he wrote a few lines rapidly, and despatched them at once by Mrs. Lisle's manservant, giving him money to pay his expenses. His labour was lost, however; for half an hour before the servant reached the port, the ship carrying away Reginald Lisle and Major Brandrum had got under weigh.

Perhaps it was better for Kate Malcolm that her young companion's grief continued long unsubsided; for the anguish of her own mind, if not relieved, was in a degree suspended for the time by the task of consoling and supporting; and there were many painful hours coming rapidly forward out of the dim treasury of the future. All that

night she sat by Louisa's bedside, and sleep visited the eyelids of neither. In the morning, however, Reginald's sister became somewhat more calm; and her little strength being exhausted, she slept.

Kate stole away to her own room, and sitting down gave way to the thoughts which had been banished. 'They were multitudinous as the waves of the sea, and dark and stormy too. Oh! what questions were there not ready for her fancy at every turn! Oh! what doubts and fears, and vague misty horrors rose up before her! It were endless to detail them; but ever and anon her lips murmured, and the low words they uttered were as an echo to some which Lutwich had once addressed to her.

"He had no faults towards me," she said; "he had no faults towards me!" and with the true love of woman she seemed to cling to him the more ardently, when she thought of him lonely, desolate, despairing, criminal — ay, even criminal, for still she thought, "he had no faults towards me;" and it seemed to her that the want of conscious innocence must be to him the summit of all misfortune — the crowning misery of all — that which required more than all else consolation and support. She never dreamed of erecting herself into his judge, of condemning him, of punishing him beyond all the punishments of the law, by snatching from him her love, in addition to all of which the law would deprive him.

Yet she was as pure and as innocent herself as human being can be, as high principled, as virtuous; but there

was nothing harsh in her virtue. Had she felt, had she wished, had she done anything that was wrong, none would have judged more severely; but it was in her own case only that she felt a right to judge and to condemn. The character may be rare, but it does exist; it may be foolish, but there is much Christianity in it. She would have acted thus, felt thus, to any one, how much more to one whom she loved!

It may be thought that she would naturally have felt inclined to repel the very idea of his criminality with scorn and indignation if she loved him so well, and sometimes she was inclined to do so; but yet he had let fall words when they were together at his cottage, which might well apply to his present situation; and she had seen how deadly pale he had turned when the officers appeared. I must not say that this created a suspicion; for that is not the right name for the feeling which took possession of her: it created a dread — a terrible dread, indeed, that he might be guilty, that he might be proved so, that he might be made to suffer the punishment of guilt; and, oh! how her heart sank at the thought of all that was to follow — of the dark, terrible future, hurrying on like a thunder-cloud, big with tempest and destruction. She felt that it was enough to turn her brain, if she remained thinking over it; and yet there was a strange, awful fascination in the serpent eyes of fate, which made it impossible to withdraw from the contemplation, which glued her thoughts to that one subject; and for full two hours she remained there with her

head resting on her hand, and her eyes, sightless to present objects, fixed upon one spot, while the mind saw nothing but the dark shadow of the future.

At length a servant entered the room, and started at seeing her; for the girl had thought that she was still in the chamber of Louisa Lisle.

"La, Miss!" she said, "I did not know you were here. Had you not better have some breakfast?"

"If you please, Bessy," replied Kate. "Your young lady is still asleep, I hope. She was so when I left her a few minutes ago."

A few minutes! It was two hours.

She descended to the drawing-room shortly after, and there everything put her in mind of Mrs. Lisle, for whom, in the short space of their acquaintance, she had conceived a great reverence and affection; but these thoughts brought no relief, not even that of change. It was sorrow added to sorrow, and Kate sat down and wept. The housemaid placed the breakfast things before her, and seeing her in tears tried to comfort her; but how worse than idle were the words of consolation. They sounded even harsh to her; for could she have been comforted, she would have hated herself. Louisa's bell rang, and it was a good excuse for Kate to run up and leave the breakfast nearly untasted; and when, after sitting for an hour with her young friend, she came down again, a letter was put into her hand.

She paused and gazed at the address for two or three minutes before she opened it. Oh! how different is the

fresh confidence of youth from the cold and chilly apprehension of experience. Sorrow after sorrow plants dread in the mind, till the world is a garden of fears. Kate was very young to know such things, but she had had many lessons in the bitter tasks of life, and even the sight of a strange handwriting made her heart sink. What fresh sorrows might lie beneath? At length she broke the seal, and read the sad words which Lutwich had written her from his prison. She did not ask herself what she should do; for she resolved at once to go. But, at the same time, she judged that it would be only right to tell Louisa all. She had no one to consult with, no one to communicate with, but her; and although she had been accustomed much to act for herself, and even for her father, too, yet this was a new case, and she shrank from all the first steps. To Louisa, she must speak, she thought; but still the task was not easy for her. She did not like to obtrude other thoughts upon one so completely overwhelmed with her own grief: and then she had to tell her love and her promises to an ear which she fancied quite unprepared to hear them.

Poor Kate hesitated, and delayed for some time, read and re-read the letter often, felt eager to set out, and yet dreaded the undertaking; and thus the day wore away towards evening, before she could make up her mind to say what she intended to her friend. At length, accusing herself of weakness, she went up to Louisa's room, and, much to her relief, found her greatly calmed. She had a letter before her, and she had been weeping; but her eyes were

now dry, and she looked up almost brightly, as Kate entered.

"This is from my dear mother," she said. "It seems, Kate, like a message from her in heaven. Mrs. Jones found it in the drawer and brought it to me. Oh! dear Kate, mamma was quite prepared for what has happened, and wrote this three or four months ago, to comfort me when she should be gone. Read that part."

Kate took it, and read the few concluding lines to which Louisa pointed.

"Give not way, then, to sorrow, my dear child," were the words; "for the only pang of death to me, is parting from you and your dear brother; but when I consider how short a time we shall be separated, and how happy will be our re-union, even that grief is greatly mitigated. I am weak enough to feel much satisfaction in knowing that when death comes, it will be without any corporeal suffering — for I will own that I have always dreaded too much the bodily anguish of long sickness; and I know, my dear child, that it will be a comfort to you to feel that I have passed from life without pain. The shock for you will, I fear, be great, and I have considered much whether it were not better to prepare your mind for it, by telling you of the probable end of my earthly being. I trust I act wisely in abstaining; and I do so, because the period being altogether uncertain, I might only be inflicting upon you months and even years of hourly dread and intense anxiety, when you can do nothing to stay the time of separation. Farewell, then, my beloved

child; grieve not for me more than nature compels you to grieve. Your mother has shown her love for you in the precepts she has given you; and you, I am quite sure, will show your love for her by keeping them in mind. Fortitude, benevolence, truth, are all needful in this world, and all tend to that whither I am going. Farewell, then, till we meet again in heaven."

The tears rose again in Kate Malcolm's eyes; but she felt that such a letter must be a comfort indeed, and when she compared it with the one she had herself received, she felt that Louisa's affliction might well be lighter than her own.

That gave her courage to speak; and after a few words on the subject of the dead, she said, — "It grieves me much, dear Louisa, to be obliged to leave you this evening for a few hours; but I have a sad duty to perform — I know not how to explain it, or rather, how to begin the explanation. But read that letter; it will save me, perhaps, some words painful to speak;" and with a flushed cheek, she placed the note she had received before her friend.

Ere she looked at it, Louisa raised her eyes earnestly to Kate's face, and said in a low sweet voice, "Perhaps I can spare you more, my dear sister. I saw last night that your fate was a very sad one. I was sure, from the first, that I could not be mistaken, and when that terrible scene occurred, I had no longer a doubt."

Kate bent her blushing face on her friend's shoulder, and remained silent and anxious, while Louisa read the letter.

The first words Louisa spoke were a great relief to her. "You will go, of course," she said: "such an appeal as that you must not reject."

"I will go, certainly, dear Louisa," replied Kate. "I must not deny that affection leads me; but even if it did not, I think duty would. I told you once how he had come to my rescue, at a moment when I was reasonably alarmed by the shameful conduct of some bad men, whose motives I do not even now clearly comprehend; but I did not, and hardly can, tell all the delicate and kind attention he showed me, how his whole thoughts seemed directed to relieve me from that embarrassment which being forced to remain for a whole night in his house, without any friend near me, might well produce. Whatever may be his faults to others, Louisa, he has had none to me; and I should think myself selfish, and base, and cruel, if I refused him comfort in his distress."

"Oh! yes, go—go by all means," said Louisa Lisle; "but take the housekeeper with you, Kate. She can wait in the coach while you go in. It will be better to have some one with you."

"I do not know how to explain my errand to her," replied Kate, thoughtfully; "it is a strange situation mine, Louisa—I am not afraid to go alone; but how should I be able to tell a stranger all that leads me thither?"

"I will explain," said Louisa Lisle; "ring the bell, my dear sister, and then go and get ready. I will tell the good old lady all that is needful for her to know."

About half an hour passed, and then Kate Malcolm set out for the prison, in the only conveyance which could be procured in the neighbourhood, a common post-chaise. She was accompanied, as Louisa had proposed, by Mrs. Jones the housekeeper, a good, sensible, matter-of-fact kind of woman, who was benevolently inclined to comfort her young companion, as far as her qualities would allow her to do so; but there are times when trite motives of consolation jar sadly with the spirit; and Kate's mind was so full of anxieties, that even the words of hope sounded importunate.

"Don't be so sad, Miss Kate," said Mrs. Jones; "I dare say the gentleman will soon get out. Many a man is accused of things he never did; and then he is sure to get right when he proves his innocence."

What would not Kate have given to be sure that Lutwich could prove his innocence! "I trust it is so, Mrs. Jones," she answered; "but I have heard of many an innocent person being condemned."

"Oh! pooh, pooh!" said the housekeeper; "not when they have good friends, and plenty of money to pay the lawyers. Many a poor fellow, I dare say, without a friend or a guinea, is hanged for what he never did, and the more innocent and simple he is, the more likely to be condemned; for he is not shrewd enough to find out all the roguery. But when a man has wit, and money, and high relations, like this gentleman, he is sure to do very well."

Kate fell into thought again without reply, and after a weary drive of more than an hour, the chaise stopped be-

fore the gates of the prison. Kate looked up at the windowless brick walls, and how her heart sank beneath their frowning aspect! There were two or three people passing, a drunken-looking man amongst the rest, with an apron before him, and a two-foot rule in his hand, and they all stopped to see if a prisoner was about to be brought out of the chaise; but when the post-boy put down the step, and Kate alighted, the half-tipsy workman curled up his nose, saying aloud, "Only some pad's dolly come to see her pal," and walked away.

The poor girl's cheek turned as red as a rose; but Mrs. Jones, who had heard what passed, followed her, whispering, "Never mind him, Ma'am, he 's a low fellow, and drunk, moreover. I 'll go up the steps and inquire."

The porter looked hard at both the old lady and Kate Malcolm, and something in the air and manner of the latter, as she stood on the steps in deep mourning, made him civil enough. "The colonel will be sorry, Ma'am, you had the trouble," he said; "but, you see, you 'll not be able to see him to-day, for he 's been sent for to the justice's for examination, and no one can tell how long he may be; for I hear it 's a queer case."

"I will come again to-morrow, then," said Kate, with a disappointed heart. "Will you tell him that Miss Malcolm, to whom he wrote, came as he wished?"

"Just put down the name on that there bit of paper," replied the porter; and walking into his dingy den, Kate did as he asked.

He then gave her a hint to make her next visit somewhat earlier; and with a spirit more depressed than she had ever felt it, even in the midst of all the sorrows with which she had struggled, Kate re-entered the chaise, and ordered the driver to return whence he came. The distance back did not seem long; for deep and intense thought had taken such complete possession of Kate Malcolm, that she started when the driver stopped, unable to believe that the tedious way, as it had seemed an hour or two before, had dwindled into so small a space.

CHAPTER IX.

IN the days I write of, a London police-office was a very different utensil from that which it is now. It, itself, and everything in it, were different. The justice was quite a different animal, the officers or constables were quite different, the clerk was different, the manner of conducting the business, the manner of bringing it there, the very ink-stand, were all different. Law had very little to do with the business, and justice sometimes still less. One of the best magistrates who ever sat there was by nature and trade a saddler. Officers, as well as justices, were chosen for their wit and shrewdness, more than for their learning or honesty. There was no preventive force, but an excellent detective one; and as the commission of crimes was the remote, while the capture of criminals was the proximate, cause of emolument to all concerned, it very naturally happened that in the eyes of the police, robbery, housebreaking, picking pockets, and the higher branches of swindling, were professions which deserved encouragement and countenance. Petty larcency and such sorts of error were looked upon as apprenticeship.

As to the office itself, it had just emerged from the humble state of "the justice's parlour;" but it was now furnished with a bar, as one of the gentlemen on the bench

had, not long before, had his head broken by a refractory felon, with whom he had often smoked his pipe, and who took a different view of their relative situations from the magistrate himself. A hint, too, had been given from a high power, that it would be better for those in authority not to be, like the princes of Israel, partakers with thieves; but still a great deal of the old leaven was left, and every day's sitting presented a scene which would have very much shocked our present notions of the administration of justice.

It was to the bar of one of these police-offices, then, that Colonel Lutwich was brought, at about three o'clock of the day on which Kate went to visit him in prison. The magistrate before whom he appeared did not like him; for Lutwich had never descended from his original station to seek the connivance of justice or officer, either by bribery or familiarity; but the justice had great reverence for him, for, though strongly suspected, he had set all the arts of Bow-street at defiance. He was glad, then, to have so distinguished a personage under his thumb; but, at the same time, inclined to treat him with all sort of ceremonious respect, and even with apparent indulgence, while he relaxed his grasp of him in no degree, and enjoyed in anticipation the satisfaction of frustrating all his wiles, and sending him for trial with a case which would insure condemnation.

The court was crowded, not alone with the usual attendants upon such scenes, but with several persons of a better class; and when Colonel Lutwich was brought forward

between two officers, a number of heads were thrust out to look at him. The prisoner ran his eye over the crowd of spectators with a firm, haughty air; but suddenly his glance was arrested, and fixed upon one spot, and a strange change came over his expressive face. So marked was the alteration, that the persons standing near the place where his eyes rested, turned round and looked at the group near them. There was nothing remarkable in it: a young gentleman, fashionably dressed, looking forward into the court; a stout, jolly-looking, middle-aged man in black, speaking in a low tone to a squinting man, habited like a post-boy, behind him, and the said post-boy, were all of which that group consisted. And yet the prisoner's eyes had lightened as if some sudden intelligence had been conveyed to him from that part of the court; or as if, with rapid combination, he had discovered, from something he saw there, facts which had before been dark and mysterious.

The blood mounted up into the cheek of Sir Theodore Broughton, as the firm, steady gaze of Lutwich rested upon him, and the next moment a sarcastic smile curled the prisoner's lip, and he turned towards the magistrate. That smile stung the young baronet more than the lash of a horse-whip would have done.

"I am sorry to see you here, Colonel Lutwich," said the magistrate, resolved to make him feel all that was painful in his situation to the utmost, "and of course I feel that any charge brought against a gentleman of your station and respectability, must be received with caution; but

at the same time, where there is information upon oath of a felony being committed by any man, whatever be his rank, a warrant must issue against him."

"Undoubtedly, Sir," replied the prisoner, "you could do no less than you have done, if such information has been tendered to you. At the same time, I am glad to find that you allow the improbability of the story, as I shall soon, I doubt not, be able to show you that it is more than improbable."

The magistrate did not like the reply; but after humming for a moment, he called upon Edward Warwick, one of the officers of the sheriff of Middlesex, to come forward and make his deposition.

The man, then, in a somewhat rambling and unconnected manner, stated the facts connected with the robbery, which must be fresh in the recollection of the reader, and ended by swearing that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, it had been committed by the prisoner at the bar.

When he had done, Colonel Lutwich fixed his eyes sternly upon him for a moment, and was about to speak, when a lawyer, who was in the court, stopped him, whispering, "Had you not better reserve your defence, colonel?"

"No," said Lutwich, sternly; "I have nothing to fear. Now answer me, Edward Warwick. Do you speak from my personal appearance?"

"Why, I mean to say, I think it was you," answered the man, doggedly.

"Sir, that will not do," replied Lutwich. "You shall give me a straightforward answer before you go, depend upon it. I ask you — and remember you are upon your oath — I ask you if I bear any resemblance whatever to the man who robbed you?"

"Why, as to resemblance," said the bailiff, "people look so different at different times, that I can't say."

"Then you mean to say that it is not by any personal resemblance you identify me," rejoined Lutwich.

"Yes, there may be a likeness," replied the man.

"Do you mean to say you recognise me, as I stand here?" demanded Lutwich, sternly.

"Yes I do," answered the officer.

"Then, Sir, you are perjured," replied Lutwich, with a look of contempt.

"Nay, nay, colonel!" exclaimed the magistrate, in a bland tone, "that is going a little beyond the bounds allowable even to gentlemen in your unpleasant situation."

"Not, Sir, when they can prove what they say," replied the prisoner: "this man — you will hardly believe it, for it is almost incredible — this man, in my presence, gave information of this very robbery to my excellent friend Sir Harry Jarvis, and then solemnly declared that he had never seen the highwayman before, describing him as a person as unlike myself as possible. It luckily happens that Sir Harry took down what he said; but I repeat that the statement was made in my presence, I sitting face to face with him."

"How happens this, Sir?" asked the magistrate, sharply frowning at the bailiff; for he evidently thought a good case was about to break down.

The man paused in dull silence for a minute or two, and then answered, "I remember quite well going to Sir Harry Jarvis, and seeing him there, but I didn't recollect him at the minute."

"More marvellous still!" exclaimed Lutwich, with a scoff; "that you then did not recollect me a few minutes after, and now recollect me several weeks after. That you did not recognise me when I had had no time to change my dress, and recognise me now when my dress is quite different from what it was that night."

"Very extraordinary, indeed!" said the magistrate; "what have you got to answer to this, witness?"

The man was silent; and after having waited a minute, Lutwich addressed the bench: "Sir, I think you must see," he said, "that I am justified in saying this man is perjured; and the evidence of Sir Harry Jarvis will prove it. But there is something more: I am inclined to believe that there is something like a conspiracy here, and before I quit this place I trust you will give me an opportunity of sifting that matter to the bottom."

"You are at liberty to ask the witness any questions you think fit," replied the justice.

"Well, then, Mr. Warwick," said the prisoner, "will you have the goodness to say whether you do or do not

recognise me by my face, figure, or appearance, as the man who robbed you?"

"No, not by that there," replied the bailiff, getting confused; "but I have reason to think it was you."

"What reason?" demanded Lutwich, vehemently.

"Why, a gentleman came and told me, he had got a man who would swear to you," replied the bailiff.

"Oh, ho!" said Lutwich; "now we are coming to the truth. What gentleman?"

"I don't know," said the man, looking round the court; "he was here just now."

"I know he was," answered the prisoner; "and he slipped away at my two last questions. Do you know his name?"

"No, I don't," said the bailiff.

"Another question, if you please," rejoined Lutwich, "did he show you the man *he had got*?" and he laid strong emphasis upon the words. "Did he show you this man he had got who would swear to me?"

"Yes," replied the bailiff; "and he said he would."

"So you got up your evidence together," said Lutwich. "Now, your worship, I think I have shown sufficiently what sort of a case this is. I will only farther state, that I once had the good fortune of frustrating a most infamous scheme concocted by a gentleman who was but now in court, and who takes his revenge by suborning evidence against me. I must contend that you have nothing to proceed upon."

"But there is the man who can swear to you!" exclaimed the bailiff.

"Where?" demanded Lutwich, gazing round.

"William Havant!" exclaimed an officer; but no William Havant appeared.

"We have certainly something in the form of a deposition," said the judge, "from a post-boy of St. Albans. It shall be read over to you, if you like."

"If I have the opportunity of cross-examining him," replied Lutwich, "it may be of some avail — otherwise, I think, of none. Let him be produced; and I shall be able to show, I doubt not, that the same nefarious means have been used with him as with this perjurer. If he is not produced, I must contend that there is no pretence whatever for detaining me, and the warrant must be discharged."

"Too fast, colonel; too fast," said the magistrate, with a quiet smile. Seek for William Havant, constable."

"He was here a minute ago, your worship," replied a man; "but somebody called him out on business."

"Then all I can do, is to remand you for farther examination, colonel," observed the justice.

"This is very hard!" said Lutwich, bitterly.

"I have a notion it might be harder," replied the magistrate. "Prisoner remanded to this day week."

The prisoner was accordingly removed from the bar, and, accompanied by two constables, was placed in a hackney coach, to be conveyed back to prison. As he was mounting the step he perceived the post-boy, Hanging-wood

Bill pushing his way back into the court through the little crowd that surrounded the door, and he was inclined to pause and demand that the investigation should proceed, feeling that he had gained an advantage which might be lost by delay. The officers hurried him in, however, and the coachman was ordered to drive on.

"Beg your pardon, colonel," said the chief constable, as soon as the lumbering vehicle was on its way; "but it's better for you to let it stop where it is. You've got a week to come and go upon."

"In which they may make up their story better than they have it now," replied Lutwich, gloomily.

"No, no, Sir," replied the other, who was a stout jolly-looking man; "that won't do. It's all for your advantage, I can tell you, if you work it well. I don't mean to say that your defence wasn't a good one. It was capital; and, if it comes to a trial, I dare say you'll be able to get out a few more facts to prove that Bill has been bribed. Indeed, there is no manner of doubt he has, for you are not a man to refuse him his fair snack, and so make him turn viperous. But you might say what you liked now, the old gentleman in the wig is determined to commit you; and so a week gained is somewhat. As for Master Hangingwood Bill, he shall swing himself within six months for this here very job. He has no business to come meddling with our affairs. He thought to patch it up by telling me all about it; but that won't do. If we suffered interlopers, we should never do no business."

"Ay, and what did he tell you?" asked Lutwich.

"Why, all about it," said the officer. "I don't mind letting you know, colonel, because it may help you, and I should like to spoil this job for him. He's going to blow the whole thing, how you put off your two coats and the padding in Ridge-hill copse, and how you used to rub your chin over with indigo, and put on a black wig, and where you stowed away the lantern and all. It will all come out this time, depend upon it."

Lutwich's heart sank; but still he continued the conversation, hoping to gain more information. "Did he tell you nothing about the bribery?" he inquired.

"No, no; he kept that snug enough," replied the officer; "but it was that young fellow, I am sure, that Sir Theodore, who, they say, has a grudge against you. But I'll find it out, close as he is."

"If you do," answered Lutwich, "and will enable me prove it on my trial, you and your friend here shall have fifty pounds a piece the very day you bring me the full information; and, in the event of my being acquitted, you shall each have a hundred pounds a piece to make up for losses."

"Well, that's devilish handsome," said the man; "you seem to be flush of cash, colonel?"

"I have at this moment plenty," replied the prisoner, anxious to get every insight into his situation that he could. "The truth is, I have lately sold all my property, intending to lead a quieter life, and upon that score I did you good

fellows some injustice; for I thought you were resolved I should not be quiet, and had taken me on that account, although I had resolved beforehand to make you each a handsome present, which would have put things square, as you call it. Indeed, I should have done so before now, only I was out of town till the night before last."

"No, we had nothing to do with it," replied the officer; "it was all that fellow's doing. You shall have the information, sure enough; and all we can do to help you we will; but I am afraid, now you've been had up, you'll not get off, do what me may. The old beak is against you. He has been looking after you a long while, 'cause you've been high with him, and he won't stand that. He's got a deal of information about you in his little book; and it will all come out this time. I don't see well what you can do, unless —"

"Unless what?" asked Lutwich, eagerly.

"Unless you would just compromise the affair with Billy, and get him out of the way before next Wednesday," replied the officer; "he has taken one bribe to peach, depend upon it, he'll take t' other to hold his tongue. But mind, don't pay all till after the trial, for he's not to be trusted. He shall swing in six months for all that."

"Do you think you can manage it for me?" asked the prisoner, after thinking heavily for some minutes.

"No, that won't do," said the officer; "I might be caught; and he'd be very shy with me too. You must get some one he doesn't know, colonel; the lawyer, or some

one, who will offer him a good round sum, half down, half after the trial. Send to him at night, for he's the greater part of the day kept quite close under the eyes of that barrownight, and t' other chap the tutor. A pretty tutor! why I once had him in custody for violence to a woman; but he compromised it, or he would never have been tutor to nobody."

"But where is this scoundrelly informer to be found?" asked Lutwich; "he must have left St. Albans."

"Oh, ay, he's lodged quite genteel," said the officer; "he has a second floor in Swallow-street, No. 103, with a woman who sells hosiery. Her husband was once one of our people; but he's grown corpulent, and left off business, but he looks after Bill sharp enough, so you had better send about eight o'clock, when he comes to our club; for if you don't get Hanging-wood Bill out of the way you're done, take my word for it, colonel."

With this pleasant announcement the conversation closed, and soon after Lutwich was once more consigned to the gloomy walls, whence he had emerged only for examination.

CHAPTER X.

THE prisoner sat alone. Darkness and gloom were upon him. Conscience had been busily at work — conscience which had been silent for years. The whirl and the confusion of the busy world, the sound of gay tongues, and music, and laughter, and revelry, the light joke, the gay scoff, the claims of business, pleasure, necessity, even of the light virtues, easily attended to by a kind and liberal heart, the loud call of passion, enterprise, excitement, make such a hubbub round the ears of the mind in the whirlpool of society, that *the small still voice within us* is unheard, though it speak never so plainly.

Who can attend to its counsels or its reproaches in the midst of life's turmoil? or who will?

Does your keen manufacturer, greedy of wealth, grinding the bones and sinews of his fellow-men in the hot mill — does he attend to it, while the steam-engine roars and hisses, and sounds at every heavy stroke “wealth! wealth! wealth! wealth!”

Does the care-worn lawyer in the crowded court or the dull chambers, amidst the babble of technical terms, the rigmarole of forms, or even when poring over the rustling parchment? Do not the crabbed letters, traced with such

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care by the engrossing clerk, find tongues to drown that small still voice?

Does yonder landlord, with the poor of his domain consigned to the squalid dens and famishing pittance of the union-house, lest they should eat up his rents, while he rolls in his carriage from the sumptuous dinner to the noisy Commons — does he hear the voice? Or do the rattle of infinite wheels and gay jokes, or the buzz of dull speeches drown it? Does the merchant upon change? Does the man of pleasure? Does the courtier? Does the statesman? Or do they not all find the thunder of their several callings outroar the quiet monitor within?

Oh, were the guilt of men but weighed by their opportunities, were the heaviness or lightness of those things which silence the voice of conscience within them, but judged as well as their acts, who would not stand in the dock? And may it not be so hereafter? May not the thief be asked, what was it made you neglect the safeguard planted in your breast by Heaven? and may he not answer — want, ignorance, evil associates, injustice, oppression? And may not the rich neglecter of all duties be so questioned likewise, and find nothing to reply but — pleasure, ambition, avarice? Then, with Omniscience for a judge, how will the more guilty tremble?

No, no; conscience is drowned in pleasant sounds even more easily than in the cries of want. It needs silence, solitude, the lull of passions, and the death of hopes, to let that still small voice reach the heart's ear, and awaken repentance and reformation.

Lutwich had sat in silence and in solitude, and the lamp of hope burnt very dim — so dim that it had no glare to dazzle the eye. He thought with cold heart and clear mind of his situation and his prospects. He looked forward; he looked backward. All was dark, except a small, bright spot just left behind; but he felt no power, he entertained no expectation of being able to turn back and stand on that bright oasis again. Oh, how he regretted the past! Oh, what would he not have given to have recalled that sad, that fatal hour, when in a spirit of mad frolic more than deliberate crime, he had first tasted a cup from which he had never afterwards been able to abstain, so strong had been its charm for his wild and adventurous spirit. But the hour was beyond recall; its deeds were done; its seed sown; and the harvest was to be reaped — its bitter harvest!

The future, what did it present? Despair. He pondered the words of the man who had accompanied him from the office to the prison. He knew him to be a keen judge of such cases, and he read his opinion of his own well and clearly. Moreover, he was conscious that he was open to the sword of justice upon so many points, that once it was raised to strike it could not fail to slay. And what was the faint, faint hope which had been held out to him? Was it real or illusory? To bribe a felon without honour, faith, or honesty, to conceal crimes which he had already denounced, to fly from his country, or to hide himself for months, and that, too, when there was an eager enemy

urging him on. Was he likely to consent? Was he likely to keep his word if he promised? Was it not much more probable that he would use the very proposal only to wring a further reward from those who had already taught him to betray?

Yet it was the only hope. He thought of Kate Malcolm, and he clung to it. "If she shrinks from me," he thought, "I will abandon all, and bear my fate; but if she still clings to me, I will make that one effort."

Then came the terrible question, "Will she shrink from me?" But a voice in his heart instantly answered "No!" He had divined her nature; and he said No boldly. "She has come once," he thought, "and she will come again. But how shall I deal with her when she does come? Can I — dare I tell her truth? Can I — dare I tell her falsehood? No, no! That last I will not do at all events!"

The heavy key turned in the lock, the bolts above and below were withdrawn, and the turnkey said, "A lady, Sir, wants to see you."

Lutwich started forward, and took Kate's hand in his. Hers was as cold as marble; for the very passages of a prison were enough to chill her to the heart. She gazed anxiously in his face, and saw how two short days had changed it. Her eye ran over his limbs, and a sensation of relief spread through her bosom. There were no fetters. He had been remanded — not committed; and the gaoler had not thought it necessary to put that indignity upon him.

"Oh Kate, this is kind — this is very kind," he said; "it is almost more than I dared hope for;" and he drew her gently to a chair, and seated himself beside her.

"Why, Henry?" she said, "why should you doubt I would come? After the words you have spoken and I have spoken, there is nothing that I ought not to do for you. But let me pause a moment to recover; for the sights and sounds without there have made my heart beat sadly. How long will they let me stay?"

"As long as you please, dear girl," replied the prisoner; "but I will not let you stay long. This is no place for you, my Kate; and though you bring sunshine with you to the poor captive's cell, yet he must not be selfish in your case, love."

"I am sure you will not," she answered; and then she added, with a sweet, sorrowful smile, "you have had no faults to me, Henry."

Lutwich pressed her for one moment to his heart, and the unwonted tears rose in his eyes. "And you remember those words," he said; "yes, Kate, yes, you have remembered them, and repeated them to yourself, and asked if he whom you love, can have had grievous faults to others?"

"Perhaps I have," she answered simply, "and yet it was foolish to do so, for it could make no difference to me. Besides, you told me long ago that you had many faults; but as they were not to me, I have nought to do with them: and now tell me, Henry, what can be done

for you? The sight of this cheerful room gives me better hopes. It is hardly like a prison."

Lutwich silently raised his hand, and pointed to the barred windows, and Kate dropped her eyes towards the ground, and fell into bitter thought.

"But tell me," she said at length, "what can be done for you?"

"But little, I fear, dear girl," he replied sadly, "very, very little." He paused with a sigh, and then added, "I know, my Kate, you will not ask me any questions which might be painful for me to answer; but I must give you, of my own free will, some explanation. Yet I hardly know how to do it without implying a falsehood, or relating all."

"Then do not do it at all," replied Kate, laying her small, fair hand on his; "only tell me what I can do for you."

"Nay, my Kate — my dear confiding girl," answered Lutwich, "do not be so kind to me. Your love is, indeed, a blessing undeserved; but oh, Kate! it makes my present situation almost more terrible. But I must tell you a part at least, lest you should be taken too sadly unprepared. This charge is brought against me by a base conspiracy, and out of pure revenge —"

"Then surely you can frustrate it," exclaimed his beautiful companion, with a look of joy. "I have heard high praises of the English law; I have heard it called the perfection of human wisdom; surely, if it even approach to justice,

it will not suffer an innocent man to fall before such means."

"Alas, Kate! I said not I was innocent," replied the prisoner, turning away his head. "All I said — all I do say is, that this charge would never have been brought had I not rescued you from the hands of that young scoundrel Broughton. He has me in a trap. He has, I fear, my life in his power."

Kate put her hands before her eyes, and trembled very much; and Lutwich continued, somewhat more collectedly, for the worst was now told: — "He has got a man ready to swear a crime against me. I may struggle; I may turn; I may even prove that the basest means have been employed to bring that man's evidence against me; but the evidence itself I cannot rebut. The more I think of it, the more I see it will be impossible. Scoundrel as he is, his oath will be taken; and I know no means of shaking his testimony."

"Oh, what is to be done?" cried Kate, raising her tearful eyes towards heaven; "oh, what is to be done?"

"The only thing I can do," said Lutwich, "is to endeavour by any means, were it by the sacrifice of all I have on earth, to bribe that man to absent himself both from the next examination and from the trial. Could that be done, I should be secure."

"Where is he to be found?" cried Kate, eagerly: "I will go to him — I will send to him. Tell me — tell me, Henry, where he lives, and what is his name?"

Lutwich told her, on the first impulse; but immediately after he said, "But, Kate, you must not go yourself. It is not a place to which you must venture. Six days must pass before the next examination, and there will be plenty of time to deal with him. I must find some lawyer or some friend who will undertake to negotiate with him — though it is not every one who will mix in such a business. You must not, nor, indeed, could you, properly."

Kate sat thoughtfully for a moment or two without reply; but at length she asked, — "Have you the means, Henry? I have but little, yet all I have is yours."

"It is not needful, dearest girl," replied the prisoner. "I have more than seven thousand pounds in my banker's hands. Surely a thousand now and a thousand after the trial will be enough to make that low and drunken villain do anything on earth. Oh, that seven thousand pounds! how I looked to it, my Kate, as the means of happy independence with her I love; and now it must go to purchase immunity for my offences — even if it can do that."

"And if it cannot," said Kate, catching fresh apprehension from his words and tone, "what is to be done then?"

Lutwich shook his head sadly. "There must be a parting," he said: "a parting more painful than that of soul and body. I may and will make a great effort, for you have rendered life dear and valuable to me, Kate; but I fear the effort will be in vain. I can prove the prosecutor to be perjured; I can prove the charge to be brought

forward for revenge; I can throw doubt upon the facts by many a point of time and circumstance; but there is no use of hiding it from my own eyes or from yours — that man has me in his power! I can show that within half an hour of the time the offence was committed, I was in the house of Sir Harry Jarvis; that I was there talking with him — talking with you; but a stout horse would carry a bold rider thither in the time; and he knows too much not to be able to meet me at every turn. But speaking of Sir Harry Jarvis, Kate: you must go to him, my love. You must take him a letter from me. I wrote it last night. See him yourself, dear girl; give it into his own hands, and hear what he says. Tell him, too, that I fear I must require his evidence on Wednesday next, to prove what took place at his house on the night I saw you there, and brought you the letter you had left at Dunstable. He will come, I am sure. Sir Charles Chevenix's evidence, too, might be needful; but whether it will be given or not, I doubt."

"Oh, he will give it," cried Kate; "I am quite sure. He is as generous and kind as man can be; and I will write about it myself. I have a right to do so, as this has fallen upon you, Henry, in consequence of the protection you afforded me. Sir Charles, knowing the facts, will see the motive of that base young man; and will, I am sure, do all that he can to frustrate him."

"Perhaps so," said Lutwich, thoughtfully; "yet I have my doubts. Still you can write, my Kate — to that there can be no objection; and I am very sure it will be a plea-

sure to you, to feel that you are labouring for your poor prisoner."

"It will, indeed," said Kate; "and you must let me, Henry, labour in all I can; for it is the only relief I now could have. There is much to make me sad, even besides that which is here. I have not told you yet, what has happened since you were taken away that fatal night."

"No!" exclaimed Lutwich. "What? No more misfortunes, I hope."

"A very sad one," answered Kate. "From my childhood, an evil fate has seemed to pursue all who took interest in me. Poor Mrs. Lisle! who was so kind and good to me, was taken hence that very night. She fell back suddenly, and died in a moment, as we were all going up stairs gloomily to our beds."

"Good Heaven!" cried Lutwich; "that is sad indeed; and now you are left alone, without protection or a home."

"Oh, no," answered Kate; "Louisa and I will live together for the present; and as for the rest, I have been so much accustomed — so much more than other girls of my age, I should say — to act for myself, and even for others, that I do not feel it strange, as some might do. And now tell me, Henry, when shall I see you again? Louisa's uncle is expected to-night, and I would fain be with her when he comes; for though he is very kind and good, she says, yet he is quick and blunt, so that she is

somewhat afraid of him; and there are many sad things for her to go through."

"Then come to-morrow, dear girl," said Lutwich.

"I had better go with this letter to Jarworth Park to-morrow," replied Kate; "and it may be late ere I return. If then there should be anything of importance to tell you, I will come to-morrow; but if not, the next day about this hour."

"Yet stay a little longer, Kate," said the prisoner. "Oh, dear girl, you cannot tell how long and dreary are the hours within these walls, with nothing to fill them but torturing thoughts of danger and disgrace, and wild whirling schemes to meet the one and to avert the other. Your coming is like the morning beam, which steals through the window, wanders over the floor for a short hour, and then is lost. But I cannot say to it, as to you, Oh! stay a little longer."

Kate sat down again; for she had risen; but ere she had been seated more than a minute, the turnkey opened the door, saying, "Mr. Keating, the solicitor, colonel, is in the lodge, asking to see you."

"Let him come in," said the prisoner. With one embrace, Kate and he parted; and she betook herself to the chaise, turning from one scene of gloomy sadness to another.

CHAPTER XI.

SINCE last we placed Mr. Mullins before the reader, time, business, some anxiety, and much grief, had greatly altered him. Mr. Mullins had been a very prosperous man; but prosperity is not happiness, nor the principal ingredient in it. Mr. Mullins, between seven and eight years before, had known the enjoyment of a calm domestic home: he had seen a son and a daughter growing up by his fireside; and a wife, of whom he was very fond — though her insipidity somewhat worried him — always ready to receive him with a smile, when he came home weary with thought. The son had been drowned in bathing; the daughter had died of smallpox; the mother had left the world with a broken heart; and Mr. Mullins, then one of the wealthiest solicitors in London, had retired into the country to live alone with his memories.

His nephew Reginald Lisle had been very kind to his dead boy, though a good deal older, and Louisa had been a sister to his daughter. Mr. Mullins had been very fond of them both, even when his children lived, but after they had departed, he grew fonder of them still; for the remembrance of his own loved ones clung round them, and they became to him as children: not that he would ever suffer himself to love them as much as he had loved others,

for it is wonderful how the gentle tenderness of youth twines itself round the sturdy and firm heart of strong-minded men, in the moments of sweet relaxation and idleness. He had felt too much when the ties snapped, ever to seek willingly such ties again.

He had loved his sister, too, very much; had thought her a fool at one time, indeed, for marrying the son of a noble house, and had argued evil from the connexion; but the result had justified her choice; and her conduct in every circumstance of life had won even her brother's reverence, though he was not much given to reverence anything.

But to return: he was very much changed since the night of Sir Walter Broughton's death. At that period, he had been as upright as an unstrung bow, and his eyebrows had been very black, his face displaying a good deal of healthy colour. Now, he stooped not a little; his eyebrows, long and shaggy as they had always been, were as white as snow — his cheeks almost as colourless; but the same quick, almost stern, air of decision was apparent in all he did, and the same activity in his movements.

When Kate Malcolm returned from the prison, she found the old solicitor seated by the side of Louisa Lisle, with the poor girl's hand in hers; and Mr. Mullins raised his large, dark, brilliant eyes, and fixed them upon Kate's face, as she entered, with a calm, steadfast, contemplative glance, which abashed her.

The next moment, however, as if satisfied with what he saw, he rose with a bland, grave smile, and took her hand. "So this is Kate Malcolm," he said; "my dear, I am very glad to see you. That old rascal Brandrum wrote to me about you, and Reginald wrote to me; and Louisa has been telling me about you, and my poor sister who lies in there — having left her cares behind, and taken her affections with her, I do believe — wrote to me also. — Louisa, show that you have mind and Christianity, my dear girl, and weep not thus to hear your mother named. You must hear it frequently: begin betimes, and remember that her life has sanctified her death for us all; so that while we are sad for the parting, we may rejoice that she has found peace, and gone before us, whither we must all soon follow. A few short years — perhaps a few short months — and you will have to place me within the funeral wood, and lay me in the dusty grave. Then you yourself must follow; and the brightest and most glorious now upon the earth, will tread quickly on your steps unto the grave. Believe me, Loo, when each one stands beside that small portal of the world to come, and looks back to the day when he placed the loved within it, the intervening time is shortened to a span, and he wonders how he could grieve at so brief a separation. It is six years on Midsummer-day since I buried my poor boy. I thought that life would be a long, weary waste till I rejoined him; and now 't is but as yesterday. Six years more will be the same, and we shall be together. I would not pain you, my dear child;

but you must learn to endure what reason should lighten, and what time will certainly remove. And now to matters of worldly business."

With those, I need not trouble the reader: they were not very complicated, nor very interesting. To Louisa, her uncle was kind, though somewhat, perhaps, too bluff and plain-spoken for the tenderness of grief. To Kate, he was more gentle, and hardly less kind; but had he been otherwise, she would not have felt his roughness as Louisa did, for she had been more accustomed to the hard hand of the world. The matters of business were all soon settled; and the solicitor went out to give directions which might be painful, and no way beneficial, for Louisa to hear.

While he was absent, a letter came for him, marked 'immediate;' and on his return at the end of about half an hour, it was given to him at once. He tore it open hastily, and read the contents with an eye of some anxiety apparently, for the shaggy eyebrow fell heavily over it, and the lid was high raised. In the end he bit his lip, crushed the letter in his hand, and rang the bell sharply.

"Get me a carriage of some kind," he said; "a post-chaise — a post-chaise is best. Louisa, my dear, I must run away from you for a while. I will call on Mr. Slater as I go, and ask him to do all for you that I cannot stay to do. Miss Malcolm, you will be with her, and be kind to her, I am sure. Business — business calls me to a distance — very sudden and unexpected business."

"I am afraid painful business too, Sir," replied Kate.

"Ay, not pleasant," said Mr. Mullins; "it may be better though than it seems. I must go and lock my portmanteau;" and he hurried from the room.

A cold presentiment of further sorrow fell upon Kate's heart. She knew not well why; for we often gather indications from small signs which we take in the mass, without discriminating; and it might be that while Mr. Mullins was speaking, evidently more agitated than he wished to appear, she had seen his eye once or twice take a furtive glance to Louisa, and then to herself.

In a few minutes he came down again. The chaise was announced, his baggage put in, and he hurried to the door. The two girls heard him say to the driver, "To Craig's-court, Charing-cross."

"Why, that is where Reginald's agent lives," said Louisa, without any appearance of apprehension.

"Perhaps he is going there first, to give some directions," replied Kate; but she felt a dread of she knew not what.

In the mean time, Mr. Mullins was carried rapidly to Charing-cross, thrown back in the corner of the chaise, with his head bent forward, his hand up to his mouth, and his feet crossed. He stirred not in the slightest degree, till the chaise stopped, so deeply was he buried in thought. As soon as the door was open, he ran quickly down the court, stopped at an office, the door of which was closed — for by this time it was growing late — and rang the bell.

A clerk opened it. "Is Mr. G— at home?" demanded the solicitor.

"Yes, Sir: he thought you might come, and stayed an hour longer than usual," replied the clerk; "pray walk in."

Mullins hurried forward without a pause; and, in the inner office, found a stout man looking over some papers. "This is terrible news, Mr. G—," said the old man at once; "is it quite sure?"

"I am afraid so," answered the agent — "but too true. We have no details, but the fact would seem indubitable. There is the letter we received."

Mr. Mullins read it twice. "Misfortune, — upon misfortune!" he said. "Why, when I saw you this morning you had not received this news, and yet the post had arrived."

"It came by express from Swansea," said Mr. G—. "I have sent into the city, but nothing further is known there. The letters received are all to the same effect — mere transcripts. We shall not hear anything further till Saturday, I suppose, when the *Russell* is expected at Plymouth."

"I must hear more before that," said Mr. Mullins, who was much agitated. "I will go down myself at once. In the mean time, do not let any rumour of this reach poor Louisa's ears. While there is a hope, it would be cruel to agitate her, shaken as she is, with fears which may prove groundless. I will call here as I return; and, till then, send no news to the cottage unless it be good news. Good-bye, for the present; and Heaven grant these tidings may be exaggerated."

Thus saying, he hurried out of the office, re-entered the chaise, gave the man directions where to drive, and pro-

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ceeded on his way towards the west coast without pause. He neither stopped to eat nor to sleep, and when at length he reached Barnstaple, he was completely exhausted. There he swallowed a goblet full of wine, and eating a biscuit as he went, set out in a small gig down the Taw and along the sea-coast. He stopped at many a hut in Barnstaple Bay, and earnest was his conversation with the seafaring people whom he met; but sadder and more sad became the expression of the old man's face as he went; and at length, when he ordered the driver to turn back, he sat with his eyes bent down in the vehicle, never uttering a word till he reached the door of the White Lion.

When he had entered the room prepared for him, he said, "Bring me pen, ink, and paper;" and while the waiter retired to get what he had demanded, the old solicitor walked slowly up and down the room, with deep grief written in every strong line of his face.

"That he should die just as such an unexpected piece of good fortune befell him!" he said; "God's will be done! God's will be done!"

When the paper was brought he sat down, but paused ere he began to write.

"Do you take dinner, Sir?" said the waiter.

"Yes."

"Will you please to order?"

"Anything, anything," said Mr. Mullins, and he wrote—

"MY DEAR YOUNG LADY,

"I sit down to write what will shock your kind heart to read; but you have a firmer mind and more experience than our poor Louisa; and therefore I must ask you to break to her news that will dreadfully affect her. The ship *London*, of Bristol, in which my poor nephew, Reginald, embarked for America — a finer, more noble, more honourable young man never lived — was run down during the night of Tuesday last by the *Russell*, 80-gun ship.* She sank instantly, and every soul, I am assured, perished. I have laboured all this day with no result but to blot out all remaining hope. There is none left, and I have only time before the mail departs to write these few lines. I must have one night's rest; but to-morrow early I cross the country to Plymouth, and thence go straight to London. In the mean time, for Heaven's sake, prepare poor Louisa gently for the terrible tidings, and believe me,

"My dear Miss Malcolm,

"Yours, affectionately," &c.

* This event happened on the 28th December, 1778. The reader will perceive that a little liberty has been taken with the date.

CHAPTER XII.

How the events of a single day affect not only the whole life of one individual, but the fate of many! and upon what a small circumstance will the whole turn! In the day which succeeded the departure of Mr. Mullins for the West of England, lay the key-stone of Kate Malcolm's fate, and of that of almost everybody who had become so strangely connected with her since the evening when, not knowing any of them, she had entered the yard of the Black Bull at Dunstable. I must, therefore, with somewhat more care than usual, relate her proceeding during those twelve hours.

Her first task was to write to Mary Chevenix, and she found it a more difficult one than she had anticipated. She had not remembered, when she undertook to do so, that she must necessarily display the love which existed between Lutwich and herself. Not that she would have shrunk from the task, even if she had remembered that fact; but when she sat down to fulfil her promise, it embarrassed her. She thought over the words she was to use, more than she was accustomed to think of any act which she had determined to perform, and believed right. She weighed the expressions hesitatingly; but soon she started at her own feelings, and asked, "Am I going to be insincere — untrue? No, no!

I will write what naturally comes from the heart, let Mary think what she will."

She did so; and when she read the letter over as a whole, found it far better than if she had used any art. It was sincere, straightforward, to the point. Her own feelings were not much touched upon, and though, perhaps, in a certain degree displayed, were far less so than if she had made an effort to conceal them. There was but one expression which spoke them plainly. After referring to the situation of Lutwich, she added, "You may imagine, Mary, that I am most wretched."

The letter was folded and sent; and after their sad breakfast, for it had grown a gloomy and sorrowful meal to those poor mournful girls, she explained to Louisa Lisle that she must go to Jarworth Park to see Sir Harry Jarvis upon business. "Then take the carriage, dear Kate," said Louisa Lisle, "instead of going in a post-chaise, which you will have to change. There is a carriage in the coach-house, though we have not had horses for some years; but it will be more convenient, and look more respectable than a hired vehicle. The servant, too, can go with you."

The latter offer Kate would not accept; but the carriage she took, with horses from a neighbouring inn, and thus set out for the house of Sir Harry Jarvis. She felt pleasure at the thought of seeing him again — not exactly hope, for she knew not what he could do — but still she felt glad to go, for the good old man had been so kind and courteous, and even affectionate, towards her, that she was sure she

should have sympathy, and thought that she might obtain advice, if not assistance.

The carriage rolled on; the road seemed long; and given up to her own thoughts, Kate's heart fell lower and lower. The country looked bleak and bare. There was nothing to lead away the mind; heavy meditation settled down upon her, and every dark or painful word that Lutwich had spoken came back to memory. He had seen no hope but that one of removing the testimony of William Havant, and he had seemed puzzled how to accomplish that. Hours were flying fast, Kate thought; it might take long to negotiate such an affair. Should she remain idle, without making some effort for his service? It could do no harm to see the man; and she might at all events discover how he stood affected. Lutwich had only feared for her: for herself she had no fear. Oh, if she could save him! Oh, if she could aid to save him! Would not life itself be a light sacrifice for that? But there was no danger. The place in which the man lived was not one of those nests of vice and crime of which London was so full. If not the most fashionable part of the town, it was close to it; and there could not be the slightest risk, while there might be a great advantage.

She dwelt upon these thoughts all the way; she pondered, she meditated, and every moment she became more and more confirmed in her resolution of seeking out this William Havant. At length the carriage passed through the gates of Jarworth Park, and rolled up to the house.

The postillion rang the bell, and a somewhat long pause ensued; but, in the end, the old butler, whom she knew well, opened the doors, and approached the side of the chaise.

"Oh! Miss Malcolm, I am glad to see you, Ma'am," said the old man, in a kindly tone; and ere she could ask if his master was at home, he went on, saying, "Poor Sir Harry is very bad, Miss; he's no better to-day."

"Is he ill?" exclaimed Kate, with a look of surprise and grief which touched the attached dependant.

"Very ill, Miss, indeed," said the man. "Dear me! have you not heard of it? He has been ill for the last week with a bad fever, which he caught, they think, from some vagrants who were brought before him."

"Oh! I should so much like to see him," said Kate, looking pained and bewildered.

"His cousin, Ma'am, is with him," said the butler, with a look over his shoulder: "he is a very strict, hard gentleman. But I can go up, and ask if you can see Sir Harry."

"Do — do," said Kate; "but not if it will be injurious to him. I do not wish it, if it can hurt him."

The old man went away, leaving the door open behind him; and Kate could hear some talking at the top of the first flight of stairs. Then the butler came down, and stood at the farther end of the vestibule, as if waiting for a reply to the message he had delivered; so that Kate hoped it had been sent in to Sir Harry himself. In a minute or two after, however, a man, looking like a gentleman's valet,

came down part of the way, and said, somewhat rudely, "No: it is impossible that anybody can be admitted to Sir Harry in his present state. You 're to tell the lady that."

The old butler approached the side of the carriage again, as if to repeat the reply; but Kate stopped him, saying, "I heard — I heard the message."

"It is not my master's, Miss Malcolm," he said. "He would never have sent you such a message as that."

"Is he sensible?" asked Kate, in a low voice.

"Oh dear, yes — quite," answered the servant. "He did wander a good deal some days ago; but he 's quite sensible now. I am sure he will be sorry that he has not seen you."

"I will come again," said Kate. "I have a letter to deliver to him, which I was told to give into his own hand."

"They will not let you see him, Miss, if they can help it," said the butler, almost in a whisper. "If you will give me the letter, I will give it into my master's own hand, upon my word. You can trust me, indeed, Ma'am."

"I am sure of that," replied Kate; "but they can have no greater objection to my seeing him than any one else, as soon as he is able."

"I do not know that, Ma'am," said the other, shaking his head. "Master was speaking of you the other night; and I do not think it was very pleasant to those who heard it."

"I do not know what to do," said Kate, thoughtfully; "but perhaps it would be best to give you the letter, for I know it is of great importance. But you must promise me you will give it only to Sir Harry himself, when he is well enough to read it."

"That I will, upon my word!" replied the butler; "and when nobody else is by, too. But I did not mean to say you had better not come, Miss Malcolm. I am afraid they will not let you see him; but it would be as well to try. Only let me have the letter, in case of the worst."

"Well, there it is," replied Kate, with some hesitation still remaining; and the man, taking it quietly, slipped it into his pocket, looking round to see if he were observed. She then reiterated her injunctions, and he his promise; and the carriage drove away towards London again.

More and more depressed was poor Kate Malcolm's heart. Here was another evil chance for him she loved. The evidence of a man of such high character, she had calculated much upon; for she had taken it for granted that his evidence must be favourable; and now it was clearly impossible that he could give it. Lutwich would be without the whole advantage of his testimony, at a time when, by his own acknowledgment, all that could be obtained would be hardly enough to save him. It seemed to poor Kate as if fate decreed that everything should be thrown into the scale against him; and as she thought of this new misfortune, the bitter tears ran down her cheeks. The carriage was at this moment upon the edge of Finchley

Common, and there was a very sharp and abrupt descent at that time in the road, with a small water-course across it, not kept in the best possible order, for the sun of MacAdam had not yet dawned. The post-boy was driving quick, for Kate had told him to make haste, in order to report to the prisoner before she went home, the result of her visit to Jarworth Park; and in descending the little dip in the ground — it was not more than fifty yards — he took the gutter or water-course at a right angle, and as hard as he could go. Kate felt a sharp concussion, and then saw the horses thrown upon their haunches, and the man almost pitched out of the saddle. The next instant he pulled up and dismounted, looked under the vehicle, and, approaching the window, said, "Please, Ma'am, the axle's broken."

"Good Heaven! what am I to do?" cried Kate. "Where can we get it mended?" — and she looked in the man's face, utterly bewildered.

"Why, it will be a long job," said the post-boy; "and there's never a blacksmith nearer than a mile and a half; but you see, Ma'am, we can't go on as it is, for it's a-dragging with both ends."

"Where can I find the blacksmith?" asked Kate, anxiously. "Tell me the way, and I will bring him."

"Why, the way's not very straight, nohow," said the driver. "I'd go myself, but, you see, I shouldn't like to leave you with the horses, Ma'am. But I'll tell you what: if you like to walk on about three-quarters of a mile upon

this here high road, you 'll come to Mother Havant's — a little bit of a house, with lollipops and things in the window — and she 'll send her girl down, for a sixpence, and tell Tom the blacksmith to come down here directly. We must contrive to get it spliced up somehow; for there 's no use trying to weld it here. Then we can go on gently into town."

"What did you say was the woman's name?" asked Kate.

"Mrs. Havant, Ma'am," replied the post-boy. "It 's a little red-brick house, just on the right-hand of the road, all by itself. You can't miss it. There 's lollipops and hard-bake, and all that there, in the window."

Kate got out, and walked on, musing and repeating to herself the name "Mrs. Havant — Mrs. Havant — it may be a common name about here. It is curious, too: I may as well make some inquiries."

The common looked lonely enough, and bleak, even under the full sunshine. There was not a tree to be seen; not a living creature but a stone-chat flitting from furze-bush to furze-bush, and from sandy bank to bank, with incessant motion, like a troubled spirit. Kate felt very sad and very solitary in that wide, arid heath. She was not alarmed, indeed; but there was something in the wild, desolate aspect of the place, between which and her own fate fancy drew sad parallels. She walked on quickly, however; and at length, by the side of the road, saw a small, narrow, red house, standing perfectly alone; but the long, flat, un-

finished sides of which seemed to show that the builder had intended to give it companions. In the window she perceived the various little articles of sale, with which many a poor woman ekes out her scanty means of livelihood, and over the door was written the name of Rebecca Havant. Satisfied that she was right, she entered the open door; but it cannot be said that she was much prepossessed in favour of the respectability of the place, or its mistress, by the appearance of either. The little shop was dirty, and redolent of disagreeable odours; and the woman, who appeared behind the counter, was a thin, slatternly person, with a sharp aquiline nose, very red at the point, and flanked by two keen, black eyes, somewhat bleared. A boy was sitting near her, upon a high stool, moping sulkily over a greasy slate; and a girl, somewhat younger, who could not have been often washed since her birth, was pulling her mother's apron, and seemed petitioning for something.

"Well, Ma'am, what 's for you?" said the woman, in an impatient tone, not taking any notice of the child.

"An accident has happened to the carriage in which I am travelling," replied Kate, "and the post-boy, who did not like to leave the horses, told me, that one of your children, Mrs. Havant, would run down and order the blacksmith to go and set it to rights."

"Lord! my children has plenty to do without running after blacksmiths," replied the woman, rudely.

"I did not intend that they should go without payment," answered Kate. "I'll give that little man a shilling if he

will send the blacksmith down to the carriage he will find nearly a mile on the way to Barnet."

"Ah, that alters the case," said the woman. "Bill, jump down this minute and run for Tom Smith — the lady says she will give you a shilling."

"I sha'n't go," answered the boy sullenly: "you'd only take the shilling from me if she did give it."

The woman instantly boxed his ears, but that seemed not likely to have any more effect than words, till she promised him that he should have sixpence out of the shilling for himself. Nor would he go even then till he had made her give him a peg-top as earnest, with which he walked away, his mother wisely refusing him a string till he came back again, lest he should stop to spin his top by the way.

When he was gone, after some hesitation, Kate ventured to say, putting down the promised shilling on the counter, "Is your son's name, William?"

"Yes, Ma'am," answered the woman, in a much civiler tone; "and a troublesome, obstinate little devil he is."

"It is curious," said Kate, "I am looking for a person of the name of William Havant — I believe he's in London though."

"It's my brother-in-law, I dare say," replied the woman; "he was post-boy at the Woolpack, at St. Albans."

"The same," replied Kate.

"Lord 'a mercy! what can a young lady like you want with he?" exclaimed Mrs. Rebecca Havant.

"Perhaps something that may turn to his advantage," answered Kate; "do you think you could convey a message to him privately without the people who have got him in London knowing it?"

"Why, uncle Bill's up stairs," cried the little girl, "a-drinking his gin-and-water."

It was now her turn to have her ears boxed; but that could not remedy the indiscretion which her mother seemed to think she had committed, and, therefore, the good lady turned again to Kate, saying, with a certain degree of menace in her tone, "I hope you wants to do him no harm, Ma'am; for you see—"

Kate smiled: "What harm could I do him?" she said. "I am not very strong, my good lady; and all I want is to speak a few words with him, and tell him something that may be very serviceable to him if he manages rightly."

The woman still looked doubtful; but at length, as if she had made up her mind, she said, with a laugh, "Well, I suppose we could manage you, if you did;" and turning round, she passed through a swing-door, and Kate could hear her step ascending the stairs. There was something unpleasant and threatening in the woman's words and manner, which in a degree alarmed her; for a moment she thought of quitting the shop and hastening back to the chaise. But the next instant she nerved her heart with the thought, that she was serving Lutwich; and with a particle of that superstition which is kneaded more or less into the clay of every one, she dwelt with fanciful hopes upon the extra-

ordinary fact of her having so unexpectedly fallen upon the very man she had made up her mind to seek. A long consultation seemed to be going on up stairs, for she heard a murmur of voices, protracted through nearly a quarter of an hour; but at length the woman came down again, and said, "You just step in here, Ma'am; he'll come down directly. I can't ask you up stairs, for the place ain't quite tidy;" and she led the way into a little dirty back-parlour, separated from the shop by a glass door.

Here Kate remained alone for two or three minutes, the woman having betaken herself to the shop again; and at the end of that time a heavy clamping boot was heard descending. The next instant the short spare figure, the low forehead, wide mouth, inturned eye, and twisted hook-nose of Hanging-wood Billy, was before her.

The man, though not drunk, had evidently been drinking a good deal, and his first words were, "Well, Ma'am, what do you want with me?"

"Is your name William Havant?" asked Kate, with a heart not quite devoid of fear, for the aspect of the scoundrel frightened her.

"Ay, ay; William Havant, or Hanging-wood Bill — it's all the same," replied the post-boy.

"I think, then," said Kate, with a voice trembling with varied emotions, "you were one of the witnesses against Colonel Lutwich on Wednesday last."

"Oh, ho! that's the go, is it?" replied the scoundrel; "and what if I was? I'm not a going to be frightened

out of telling the truth by no one. I'm sure I wish people would let me alone. I had a man last night a-threatening on me, and that's the reason they sent me down here to keep me out of the way;" and he bestowed a very hearty and blasphemous imprecation upon the heads of those whom he designated by the comprehensive pronoun "they."

"Are you sure he did not come to offer you some better inducement than threats?" asked Kate, growing a little bolder as she went on.

"I don't know what you call inducements," said the other; "he talked a bit of something in hand, if I bolted for a month or two; but he wouldn't say how much, so I couldn't use it one way or t' other; and he said, plain enough, that he'd hang me if I didn't bolt — though it's not in his skin to do that; but that's threatening, I think, notwithstanding."

"Well, I do not seek to threaten at all," replied Kate, hesitating how much she should offer; "but, on the contrary, I think I can promise you a very large sum, if you will go out of England for four or five months."

"What's the figure?" said the man, abruptly.

Kate gazed in his face for a moment, and then answered, "Why, a thousand pounds — half the money when you set out, and half as soon as the trial is over."

She saw, with joy indescribable, that the man was as if thunderstruck at the magnitude of the sum; but the demon of cupidity is never sated. He recovered himself immediately, and scratching his grey head, replied, "That won't

quite do — I must have the whole of that there when I start, or, curse me, if I don't hang him — I'll tell you what, Miss — you go and talk to the colonel about it, and I'll come and see you. When you have found out what he really can give, and have got the money all ready, I'll come and see you quietly. We'll settle it all at once, and I'll be off before any one can say Jack Robinson — you may see me start, if you like — but mind, I'll have a cool thousand down, or I don't stir a step."

"Well, so be it, then," answered Kate, repressing the joy that rose up in her breast. "Come to me to-morrow night just after dark. I shall see Colonel Lutwich previously."

"Ay, but where am I to come?" asked Hanging-wood Bill. "I always like to do business with the ladies. One gets on at a gallop."

"If you will give me some paper and a pen I will put down the address," replied the poor girl, trembling with agitation. The man grinned as he marked the emotions she suffered, and going into the shop, returned with the stump of a pen full of ink, and a scrap of ruled paper. Kate wrote the address as clearly as possible, and put it into the post-boy's hands, saying, "You will not fail to come to-morrow, immediately after sunset."

How hard a lesson it is for a young heart to learn that it must never show its eagerness, whatever be the prize it aims at, however high and ennobling, just, wise, or generous, be the motives. We live in a sea of selfishness, where

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every one is ready to devour the other, and the poor bleak, when it rises to a gilded fly upon the surface of the stream, is not so sure to be snapped up by the ravenous pike, as the inexperienced to be made a prey to the greedy the moment he displays the weakness of eagerness.

"I 'll try," said the man, in an indifferent tone; "it makes no difference to me. I shall be well paid for what I am doing any way, and so I am in no hurry to drive a bargain. Besides, one has always somewhat in hand when one makes a deal. I think, Ma'am, you ought to give me something to drink your health, if I promise to come."

Kate gave him a guinea, and then hurried out of the shop, and down the road, to the side of the carriage, glad to escape from people who excited both disgust and fear.

"I say, Becky," said the post-boy, as soon as she was gone, "I 'm like to make a good thing of this job. I've had a fifty-pound note and a promise of fifty more, for peaching of the colonel, and I shall now get a cool thousand for getting out of the way."

"I heard it all," answered the woman; "but I tell you what, Bill, you 're a fool if you don't make it well nigh double. You may see sure enough there's something under all this, and you 've got the cards in your own hands."

"Why, what would you have me do?" asked Hanging-wood Bill; "you 're a keen hand, I know, Becky, though you hav'n't played your own cards very well neither."

"The luck 's been against me," said the woman; "I saved your brother from swinging, you know that, Bill, and he

drank himself to death in a year. However, if you promise me just a fifty out of all you get, I'll tell you how you may make as much again, or perhaps more."

The bargain was struck, and retreating with her amiable brother-in-law into the back-parlour, Mrs. Havant placed her hands on her knees, and looked at him impressively: "Now, Bill," she said, "if you will take my advice, you'll do just this; but mind, you must do it exactly, or there is no use of doing anything. As soon as it's dark, you'll trot back to those two young fellows you told me of in London."

"They're not both young," said the post-boy, interrupting her; "one's an old un, and up to anything."

"That makes no difference," replied the woman; "folks wouldn't give a fifty-pound note for nothing — nor for the amusement of hanging a man — and they're not surgeons, so they don't want to dissect him. There's more in it, I tell you, than you think. So just you trot back to them, and tell them that you can't just do what they want, because a young lady has offered you a thousand pounds down if you don't. You can be very civil, you know, and all that; but stick fast, and show them that even if they keep you by might and main, you'll spoil the evidence by the way of giving it. They'll pretend not to believe a word about it, and talk high, I dare say; but you can say, it don't matter to you which you get the money of — that as for the young lady you never clapped eyes on her before — that's true, you know — and then you can tell them her name. Take my word for it, they'll know all about her,

and will see it's all true in a minute. Then they'll promise you what you want, be you sure."

"Then I shall lose t' other," said Bill, with a certain degree of contempt upon his face; "sha'n't get both that way, Becky."

"You're a fool," answered the lady; "stick out for one-half down, and if they're afeared on you, offer to let them shut you up anyhow, as soon as you've got it; but say you must just send to me for the things you've left here—"

"They'll send some of their own people," said Bill, shaking his head.

"What does that matter, you idiot?" asked the virago. "I shall know just as well that you've got the money from them if they send, as if you do; and in five hours after you shall be out, if they stick you fast in the stone pitcher. Then down to the young lady's place as fast as you can go, get the money there, and be off. If they won't give the money, the pitiful scamps, take hers at all events. She's a nice young woman; and it'll be some pleasure to save the colonel. He's quite a gentleman, and as fine a man as ever I saw. How he used to go galloping past here sometimes, on his black horse, so tight and straight, as if they were all of a piece! He'd make a handsome corpus; but I should like him to be shot, or break his neck, or something of that kind, and not hanged by the neck like a dog."

"Well, I'll try your trick, Becky," said Hanging-wood Billy; "it won't stop my getting t' other, so it can do me no harm."

“Not a snuff,” answered Mrs. Havant; and so the conversation terminated for the time. During the course of the afternoon, sundry fresh hints were given by the lady to her companion as new lights broke upon her, but as they did not at all affect the course of this history, we may as well draw the curtain upon two persons, whose sickening characters would never have been introduced here, but that they were necessary to this tale.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE spirit of the power of the air!" What an idea that name gives of the all-prevailing influence of the mighty Principle of Evil! If we look, too, at the effects of that influence which are visible to our own eyes, which are felt in our own hearts, how strange and marvellous they are! Did you ever sit, reader, calmly thinking of things pure, perhaps, and elevating, and find suddenly something foreign and deteriorating stealing amongst your thoughts, something ludicrous mingling with the most high, something earthly with the most holy? Few of those who have the power and the habit of scanning the secrets of their own bosoms, have not had to detect and war against such impulses.

But look at that young man, seated at the table, still covered with the remains of a late dinner — a very late dinner for that period — with his cheek resting on his hand, and the eyes turned towards the vacant fire-place; look at the fine high brow, the delicate features, the clear eye, the thoughtful, almost melancholy expression. What is he meditating now?

It cannot surely be evil.

Perhaps not; he may be even now tasting the drops of bitterness that spring up from the fountain of passions indulged. There may have come upon him that conscious-

ness of there being better, brighter, happier things than he has ever sought and found, which is sent at longer and longer intervals, like an angel visit, to every one who goes on in a career of wrong. The aspirations may be now for higher objects, for more ennobling pursuits, for things of the spirit and the mind, rather than the animal and the flesh.

But see, there is a slight sneering smile comes upon the lip, naturally somewhat scornful! What is the secret movement of the heart which brings that expression to the face?

Does he congratulate himself upon success and triumph over an adversary? Does he ask himself if he shall be stopped and turned back at the very gates of fruition, by the dull scruples which dotards have instilled and fools are led by?

And see, another change of countenance! He sets his teeth hard together, the compressed lips are protruded, the broad brow gathers into a frown. The idea of failing, of being frustrated, of submitting to be baffled, laughed at, scorned, despised, must have presented itself; and he turns a glance towards the face of the other man who sits on the opposite side of the table, with two decanters at his elbow, and his head nodding to his chest. Oh, what a look of loathing contempt comes upon the young man's face, as he gazes at that man — at once the tempter and the tool.

“Doctor! doctor!” exclaimed Sir Theodore Broughton.

"My dear Sir," said Doctor Gamble, starting, "I was oblivious. What is it?"

"We were to settle our final plans," said the young man; "it is late, and there you sit sleeping after your food, like a pig in a sty."

"What is to settle?" said Doctor Gamble. "I thought it was arranged that we were to suspend all proceedings till after the next examination and committal. Then we may do something."

"I should like to see her," said Sir Theodore, musing. "But you think we cannot fail now, doctor?"

"I think not," replied the doctor, stretching himself. "Lutwich out of the way would be one step to success. These other two men gone is another great one already gained; and if the hint I got of old Mrs. Lisle being dead is true, I think we have pretty well the game in our own hands. Patience, perseverance, and smooth dealing on your part, my dear Sir Theodore; ambition, vanity, and even a small portion of womanly weakness on hers, and you have the honours and the odd trick. A fair and candid offer of your heart and hand will do wonders; a private marriage, on account of your not being of age, will but be reasonable; and neither you nor I can help it if the priest have not yet taken deacon's orders, and the license be signed by the wrong man, through mistake."

Sir Theodore smiled, and fell into a reverie again; but a moment or two after, Master Hargrave entered, saying,

"Please, Sir Theodore, there's the man Bill Havant come back. He wishes to speak with you."

"What does he want now?" exclaimed the young baronet, starting up fiercely. "He promised, upon his honour, to stay there till Wednesday."

"His honour!" said Doctor Gamble, laughing. "Show him in, Zachary. Now, Master Havant, what do you want? Take a glass of wine, man, to clear your throat."

"No, thank you, Sir," replied Hanging-wood Bill, "I never drink wine;" and he looked over his shoulder to see if the door was shut.

"What has brought you back again?" asked Sir Theodore, sternly. "I gave you five guineas to go down to your sister's at Finchley Heath, and you promised neither to return, nor to let any one know where you were, till after Wednesday. I hope you are not trying to make a fool of me?"

Hanging-wood Bill looked exceedingly shrewd, but he replied with all outward respect and deference, "No, Sir, no. It's just because I do not want to make a fool of you that I have come up. I kept my promise, too, about not telling any one where I was; but bless you, Sir, some one found out."

"By an accident done on purpose, I suppose," said Doctor Gamble. "Was it the same man, Master Bill? What did he offer?"

"It wasn't no man at all," replied the post-boy; "and as for the accident, if you had left me at my old trade I

might have had some hand in it; but as I wasn't a-driving, I hadn't. The accident was the breaking of the carriage axle-tree right through the middle."

"But who was it?" exclaimed Sir Theodore, impatiently.

"Rat me, if I've a mind to tell!" said Mr. Havant, knitting his brows; "I sha'n't either, unless I'm treated more civiller. I needn't go a-begging if I give you back all I had o' ye."

"Let me talk to him, Sir Theodore," said Gamble; "you don't understand him. "He's a very honest fellow, and has come to give us information that may be useful. Who was it came to see you, Bill?"

"A young lady, Sir," answered the man, in a more placable tone — "and, my eye! what a pretty young lady, too. She was dressed all in black, she was; but that did not stop her being wonderful handsome. Such teeth! just like so many little pearls. So when the smash happened, she came into my sister-in-law's place to rest, and send for a blacksmith; and she soon found out the name, and that I was there; and she said she should like to speak to me, for she had just been going to find me out in Swallow Street. Well, when I came down, she took me into the back parlour, and talked to me about it, but quite different from t'other one!"

"What did she say?" asked Gamble.

"Why, that's the very thing," replied Bill. "She was uncommon sad and low, poor thing, about the colonel, to be sure; and then she told me I should have a thousand

pounds down in golden guineas, to-morrow night, and somewhat more after the trial, if I would but take myself off."

Sir Theodore looked at Gamble, and Gamble at Sir Theodore, and neither of them bore the best satisfied air in the world. But the tutor replied, after a moment's thought, "A thousand pounds! Pooh, pooh! That's a joke."

"Very well, Sir. It's like to be a good joke for me," replied the man, coolly.

"Why, I tell you, she has not got a thousand pounds to give," cried Gamble.

"Some one has," said Hanging-wood Bill. "I don't much care who gives it, so as I get it. But you seem to know the young lady, Sir."

"No I don't," answered the tutor; "but I know that none of Lutwich's people have got anything like that."

"Oh, I'm not sure of that, Sir," answered the man; "the colonel himself is not badly off. Howsoever, what I want to know is, am I to take the money and bolt?"

Gamble put on a severe and determined air, and replied, "I think you had better, if you can. I tell you what, Master Bill, I believe the whole story is a make up. I don't believe there is such a young lady. It's all improbable together."

"Well, I can prove there is such a young lady," replied Hanging-wood Bill, remembering the instructions of his sister-in-law, "for she wrote down her name and address for me to go and see her, and have the money just after

dark to-morrow. There it is," and he produced the paper, and showed it to Doctor Gamble.

"Well, good-evening, gentlemen," he said, after the tutor had looked at it, and Sir Theodore too had read it over Gamble's shoulder. "I'm a-going. I certainly would like better to stay in this here country than to go over the water and live upon frogs and all that for a while: but no man can say I'm wrong to make my fortune where I can."

"To be sure not," replied Gamble, with a cold and scornful air; "Go and do it."

But Sir Theodore, less shrewd than his tutor, interposed very *mal à propos*. "Stay, stay," he cried; and the man, whose countenance had fallen a good deal under some vague apprehension, which the coolness of Doctor Gamble had suggested, turned round again with a more confident air.

"My dear Sir Theodore, do not suffer yourself to be imposed upon," said Gamble aloud, that his words might reach Mr. Havant's ears; "you know that this girl has no such means at her disposal, and I know that Lutwich has none either. The man is either trying to cheat you himself, or she is cheating him."

"Well, let me speak to you in the next room for a moment," said Sir Theodore; and, turning his head as he walked towards the door, he added, "stay here till I come back."

"You have spoiled all," said Doctor Gamble, with a gesture of impatience: "I would have called him back when it was needful, but you must not think of acceding to such terms. It is all nonsense about a thousand pounds. Depend upon it, he is offered nothing like it, and you must beat him down."

"But if he won't be beat down," said the young man, "I believe the man's story is true. You heard yourself that Lutwich had got a very large sum for his plate and horses, and of course he would pay anything to save his life. What is to be done, I say, if it turns out really true?"

"Why, you must give it up, I suppose," said Gamble; "it would be paying rather too much for a toy; and besides, where are you to get the money? Donovan gave you enough to last you for half a year. It is nearly all gone already."

"I can easily get it from the Jews," said Sir Theodore, "and I will not be baulked now, doctor. I will not, by —" and he swore a vehement oath.

Gamble thought gravely. He did not like the affair in which he had plunged. The passions of his young companion had proved more vehement and headstrong than he had imagined them to be, and he felt that they were beyond his control.

"I will go and tell him he shall have the money," said the young baronet, seeing that his tutor did not answer.

“Stop, stop, stop!” cried Gamble; “let me think for one moment. Now tell me, Sir Theodore, which do you seek — the girl, or Lutwich’s life? You cannot have both.”

“Can you ask the question?” replied the young man. “I have made that scoundrel smart already, perhaps not enough, but let him go. But I swear by Heaven, nothing shall ever make me give up the pursuit of that scornful girl, till she is mine.”

“Well then,” rejoined Gamble, “let me deal with this man, and you shall both have your way, and save your money. Do you promise not to interfere?”

“Yes, if you promise me not to fail me,” replied Sir Theodore.

“If I do, kick me out of that door the next minute,” replied Gamble; “now let us go back. Don’t take any notice of what I say, however odd;” and opening the door, he went in again, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, saying, as if in continuation, “Well, if you will be such a fool, you must!”

Throwing himself into an arm chair, with a dissatisfied look, while Sir Theodore resumed his seat, the tutor gazed for a moment or two at the post-boy, with the corners of his mouth turned down, and at length said, “So you would have us believe she has promised you a thousand pounds?”

“Yes!” replied the man boldly, “she did too.”

“I don’t think you’d ever get one-third of it,” answered Gamble; “but, now, not to beat about the bush, Master

Havant, tell me, at one word, what you will engage to stay for, and give your evidence properly and truly? We don't ask you to tell any lies, or do anything that's wrong, remember. *We* are all on the side of the law. They want you to compound a felony. For what sum will you bind yourself to do what I say?"

"For a thousand pounds," replied the man; "your money is as good to me as theirs, and then I should be obliged to bolt."

"That's all nonsense," said Doctor Gamble, and he affected to labour hard to beat the man down. But Hanging-wood Bill would give way but little, for he clearly saw that he had got Sir Theodore's weakness on his side, and the sum was at length fixed at eight hundred pounds.

"Now," said Gamble, "there is one thing more to be settled, Master Havant. We must have no more of these tricks, or you may be coming to make us bid up every day. We will have it down in black and white if you please. You can write, I suppose?"

"I can write my name," replied the man.

"Well, that will do," said Gamble, "I will draw up the agreement, and you shall sign it."

"I won't sign nothing till I've got the money," said Bill.

"Then you'll get no money at all," said Gamble resolutely.

"What is it you want me to sign?" asked the other, after a moment's thought.

"Nothing but a promise to stay and give your evidence truly and sincerely, if Sir Theodore here pays you eight hundred pounds," replied Gamble, "and from the moment you have received the money, to remain constantly under the eye of one of his servants till your evidence is given."

The man hesitated a little, and then said, "I'm not a going to put myself in custody like that till I've got the money."

"I do not want you," replied Gamble, "but the case is this. We have not, of course, got the money in the house; all the banks are shut, and we must get it to-morrow. You were not to see Miss Malcolm till after dusk to-morrow. Now, if you come here at three o'clock, the money will be all ready and a servant, too, to look after you; but you must sign the promise to-night, or we might have you coming and telling us some one had offered you fifteen hundred."

The consummation was so very likely that Hanging-wood Bill could not help smiling; but still he hesitated a moment, for he was half afraid that the strict watch to which he was to be subjected, might prevent the execution of the double game which his fair sister-in-law had suggested. It seemed very like a trap, in short, into which he could not avoid plunging without displaying the whole of his purposes. Under these circumstances, he resolved, like a bold man, to take his chance, recovering courage, as he remembered that there were many ways of blinding

a spy, and escaping from any human supervision, when not fortified by tall walls with spikes at the top.

"Well," he said, after some consideration, "I'll agree; let us have the paper."

But Doctor Gamble seemed inclined to dally more than himself, and he consequently only became eager to conclude a bargain which rendered the possession of eight hundred pounds certain — at least he thought so.

"Well, what like was this young lady, my good friend?" asked the tutor, when the man's assent had been signified, and the four or five first words of the agreement proposed had been written.

The scoundrel who was by no means insensible to beauty, went over his former description, and added a few more commendations of form and feature.

"Did she seem very anxious to save the gallant colonel?" asked Doctor Gamble, with a sneering laugh.

"Ay, that she was," replied the man; "she'd give all she had in the world to get me out of the way, I'll answer for it."

"Indeed!" said the tutor, rather enjoying the torture to which he saw he was putting Sir Theodore Broughton; "then I suppose she is very much in love with him?"

"I don't know," replied Hanging-wood Bill. "But I do know that she shook like a willow in the wind, when she was talking to me, and turned red and white, and white and red, by turns. I thought she'd have gone down in a faint one time."

"Ha!" said Doctor Gamble, writing on; "poor thing! It is a pity she should set her heart upon a highwayman. We must cure her of that. The colonel, as you call him, is quite up to the mark, and if you did not bring him to Tyburn, some one else would."

"That 's true enough, I should think," replied Mr. Havant, thoughtfully, "there is no use waiting and letting some one else get the reward."

"As for that, there is no reward offered, except what we intend to give," replied Doctor Gamble; "and if there was, you should be too old a bird not to know that no one ever gets it but the officers. However, you 'll make your money of the thing. It is not every one has such a sweep as this. You can read writing, I suppose: I don't want to take you in at all, so you had better look over what I 've put down. There it is."

The man took the paper and held it near the candle to see; but he was a long time in making out the true meaning of the worthy tutor's scrawl; for, though the hand was a large one, and not very indistinct, he had no great experience in the deciphering of manuscripts; and every now and then he stopped to ask, "What 's that word?" or, "What 's this?"

At length, however, the task was complete, and he said, "Very well, I 'll sign it: give us a pen."

"Stop! stop!" said Gamble: "we must have a witness;" and Zachary Hargrave was called into the room. In his

presence the man affixed his name in a wild hilly kind of hand; and the groom added his as a witness.

"And now; where am I to go now?" asked Havant, with a stupid look.

"Wherever you like," replied Gamble. "To the devil if you please; only come back to-morrow at three, to get the money and put yourself under watch and ward. There, take him away, Hargrave, and give him a dram."

"A fine way of saving the money," said Sir Theodore, gloomily; "but never mind. I have sworn, and I will not regret one step that is needful, be it what it may."

"The money will be saved, nevertheless," replied Gamble. "Were I not sure of that, I would not go one step further; for Heaven only knows what would be Donovan's rage, if he found you had been intermeddling with Jews and usurers."

"But you have promised it to him in that paper," exclaimed Sir Theodore.

"Not a whit," exclaimed the tutor. "All the promises are on his side. He undertakes to stay and give evidence, and to put himself into our custody entirely — if you pay him the money. Now, I do not intend you should; but we must be careful about the refusal, or he will go and give evidence against Lutwich out of pure spite, if he dreams for one moment we want him to abstain. I shall quietly tell him I have seen the lady, and that his story is all nonsense. Then I'll offer him five pounds to stay, and make some one else give him ten or twenty to go."

"I do not understand your plan at all," replied the young baronet.

"All the better," answered Gamble. "It is the more likely to succeed. This depends upon myself alone; and I will carry it through, or my name is not Gamble. But now I 'll to bed, for I must be up and doing early."

CHAPTER XIV.

KATE MALCOLM passed the evening after her return from Barnet partly by the side of Louisa, partly in her own room, schooling her heart. She looked back upon days not very long gone, and upon sorrows, anxieties, and even anguish of mind suffered therein; and she remembered that she had borne afflictions very differently then. She asked herself where was the spirit of calm endurance which had then animated and supported her; where that firm, quiet, un murmuring devotion, with which she had borne poverty and adversity, and soothed and upheld her dying father? She had felt, she had grieved as much as human creature can feel and grieve, but still her courage and her tranquillity had never forsaken her; she had believed that it was her appointed lot, and she had bowed resigned to the will of God. Now, however, she had given way to agitation, terror, restless anxiety; her whole thoughts and mind had been in continual movement; her heart and her brain had laboured, aching with intensity of exertion. A new element had mingled with her feelings. She loved, and with love came all love's strange and quick emotions. But hers was not an ordinary character. With all her gentle tenderness, there were strong powers of intellect; and when she resolutely said to her own spirit, "This must

be conquered," it was conquered. Not the love, but the emotion. She prepared herself to act calmly, whatever she might be called upon to do; to suffer calmly, whatever she might be fated to suffer. She reproached herself for the agitation which she had allowed to master her while dealing with the base man whom she had met at Finchley; and she resolved to be upon her guard against herself more even than against others.

With these determinations she slept, and on the following morning woke early to put them in execution. Poor girl! she had much need of resolution.

Hardly was Kate down when a note was put into her hands. It was addressed in a stiff lawyer-like hand, which she did not know; and on opening it she found the following words: —

"Mr. Thomas Brown, attorney-at-law, presents his respectful compliments to Miss Catherine Malcolm, and begs to solicit an interview of a few minutes in the course of the morning, having some matters of much importance to communicate regarding the situation of Lieutenant-Colonel Lutwich. Mr. Brown will not give Miss Malcolm the trouble of calling at his office, but will wait upon her towards ten o'clock."

The letter was dated from one of the inns of court, and Kate immediately gave orders that if a gentleman of the name of Brown called upon her he was to be admitted. She felt her heart beat a little, as fancy tried to discover what new turn in the strange path of fate was before her;

but she instantly — with strong resolution — repressed the thoughts that would agitate her, and prepared to go through whatever might be to be suffered calmly.

Punctually as the clock struck ten, it was announced to her, then sitting with Louisa, that Mr. Brown was in the dining-room, whither she had directed him to be shown, and proceeding thither hurriedly, she found a stout man dressed in rusty black, with a pair of grey worsted stockings meeting the breeches at the knee. He wore a large pair of spectacles, too, and a bushy, well-powdered wig. He was a coarse-looking man, Kate thought, and not pleasant of aspect; but such as might well be employed about the police courts, and at the Old Bailey.

"Mr. Brown, I believe," she said, as he stood and gazed at her through his spectacles.

"Yes," he replied, "my name is Brown, Ma'am. Have I the honour of speaking to Miss Malcolm? — I expected to see an elder person."

"My name is Malcolm," answered Kate; "pray, be seated."

The visitor took a chair, hummed once or twice, drew a bundle of papers from his pocket, tied with red tape, and then said, "I have come to you, Ma'am, upon a very unpleasant, nay, painful piece of business — and quite in an unprofessional manner, to see if I cannot make some arrangement which may save the life of poor Colonel Lutwich, in whom I know you take a deep interest, and for whom

I imagine you would willingly do all that lies in your power."

Kate felt a sad tremor creeping over her; but she resisted her emotions, and quietly clasping her hands together without knowing that she did so, replied, "I would indeed, Sir — anything — anything."

"That is right," said Mr. Brown with an approving nod; "will you allow me to ask you a question or two? — You yesterday saw a man of the name of William Havant, I think?"

"I did," answered Kate, becoming more and more agitated, "but I was not aware that he would mention the fact."

"He related all the facts immediately," replied the other, "you offered him a thousand pounds, I think, my dear young lady, if he would abscond and withhold the fatal evidence against poor Colonel Lutwich."

Kate bowed her head saying in a voice hardly articulate, "Yes, Sir."

"Do you know, you acted a very imprudent part," said Brown gravely; "by what you did, you neither more nor less than rendered yourself guilty of a breach of the law, made yourself an accessory to the crime after the fact, and placed yourself within the statutes regarding the compounding of felonies."

Kate trembled violently, not indeed so much from personal fear — although she felt acutely how terrible the situation in which, according to his statement, she had placed

herself might become — as from apprehension that the very steps which she had taken might be disadvantageous to Lutwich himself.

The man before her did not altogether rightly understand the sensations which his words had produced; but he saw that she was greatly agitated, and after a moment's pause, he said, "Do not be alarmed. The man to whom you spoke is an infamous scoundrel, and of course he came and betrayed you at once. Luckily, however, it was to one who has the most friendly feelings towards you, and measures were immediately taken to shield you from the consequences of this indiscretion; which doubtless arose from a kind motive."

"It was committed, Sir," replied Kate, with a very pale cheek, "only with the view to save a gentleman who once laid me under a very great obligation."

"You are indeed the only person who could save him," replied the other; "but you did not take the right means."

"I could save him!" exclaimed Kate eagerly, "I could save him! — How? Oh, tell me how?"

"You would not do it, if I did," replied her companion, coldly.

"You are wrong, Sir," replied Kate, almost indignantly; "there is hardly anything on earth that I would not do to save him from the dreadful fate that seems before him."

"Ay! hardly," said the man with a short laugh; "but this is one of the hardlies, my dear young lady."

"Well, then, Sir, I will say nothing," replied Kate; "nothing but tell a falsehood or commit a crime. I beseech you inform me what it is."

"There is no use of it, my dear young lady," replied the visitor; "I should only distress you and pain myself. I am not new to the views of womankind upon such subjects, and although, as I have said, you could save Colonel Lutwich from all risk and danger if you would, yet the sacrifice is too great for any woman to make."

"It cannot be too great for me," said Kate, eagerly, with her eyes fixed imploringly upon his face: "once more I beseech you to tell me what it is."

"Well, I will do so, if you wish it," said the other, "but it is first necessary that you should know Colonel Lutwich's situation exactly. A highway robbery was committed on a night which you must well remember; for the colonel visited you the same evening, I find, at the house of Sir Harry Jarvis. Now, the only evidence before the magistrates at present, is that of the person robbed, who swore last Wednesday, that Colonel Lutwich was the man. His evidence unconfirmed, however, is not worth a rush, for he had before given a totally different description of the highwayman, and that in Lutwich's own presence, which can be proved. But then this man William Havant, *alias* Hanging-wood Billy, who drove the chaise that was stopped, is ready not only to swear that the man who stopped it was Colonel Lutwich, but to give such explanations as to his change of dress and appearance in order to disguise him-

self, as will at once account for the other man's first mistake, and prove the crime beyond all doubt against the prisoner. His fate, as you ought to know, is irrevocably sealed if that man appears against him."

He paused, and Kate exclaimed, sorrowfully, "How can I prevent him from appearing? You blamed me a moment ago for having endeavoured to do so."

"True," replied Mr. Brown; "because you did it imprudently, and by means that could not succeed. But hear me out. There are secrets in all things, my dear young lady. A gentleman of rank, station, and fortune has resolved to bring Lutwich to justice. This man, Havant, has placed himself entirely and totally at his disposal. He can put him in the witness-box to-morrow, or keep him away from it till the trial is over, and Lutwich acquitted, just as he pleases. Mind, I will prove all this to you before I have done. I assert nothing I cannot prove. Now, I am sorry to say, this young gentleman is not moved by any abstract love of justice in his determined pursuit of your friend; nor must you suppose either that it is by revenge, even when I tell you that Lutwich has been an obstacle in the way of his love. You know — all women know — what an overpowering passion love is; what sacrifices it will induce people to make, what acts it will hurry them on to commit. The gentleman I speak of is mad with that passion, and resolved, let it cost what it will, to sweep every obstacle away that impedes its gratification. He has no hatred to Lutwich, no enmity towards him, except as

one, and that the principal, obstacle to his success. Let his success be assured, and from that moment Lutwich is saved; this man, Havant, is sent out of England, and once acquitted the prisoner never can be tried again for the offence."

Kate had sat for some time with her hands covering her eyes; but now she started up with her cheek burning, and her eyes bright. "Cease! cease, Sir!" she cried, "and do not insult me farther. I told you I would do anything but commit a crime to serve him, ay, were it to lay down my own life for his. But if you suppose that I would become the mistress of Sir Theodore Broughton, to save my own life, or that of any one else, you are mistaken. I beg you to leave me! What have I done to make this man think thus of me?"

"I knew it," said her companion, "I knew it. I did not wish to say anything on this point, but you forced me. Let us drop the subject; but yet, before I do so, I must correct one error into which you have fallen. I neither supposed, nor proposed, that you should become the mistress of Sir Theodore. Indeed, he would not have ventured to charge me with any such commission. What he proposed was — what he has always sought — to make you his wife. His heart has been yours long. He offers you his hand, his name, and his fortune. He seeks nothing else, he never has sought anything else, but your hand. Do not mistake him or me. He wished me to put his proposal plainly before you, and to leave not only his own happi-

ness, but Colonel Lutwich's life or death at your disposal. His fate is in *your* hands — *you* give him life and liberty, or condemn him to death. But I told Sir Theodore how it would be. I know that ladies may have a great regard for a man, and think they love him very much, but not be able to sacrifice their passion even to save him from death and disgrace. Let us speak no more upon the subject. I see how it is — I had better go," and he rose, put the papers in his pocket, and moved towards the door.

"Stay, stay, stay!" cried Kate, wildly, and falling back into her seat she burst into a passion of tears. "Oh, this is terrible! oh, this is cruel!" she murmured, under the first impulse of contending emotions. "Can this man expect to win a woman's love by such means?" and she sobbed so loudly that her companion seemed to fear the sound would call some one to her aid, and tried to calm and console her.

"My dear young lady, be tranquil, be composed," he said, in a tender tone, but gazing at her beautiful face and form, as she writhed under the mental agony she suffered, with a look that would have made her blood run cold, had her suffering given her power to observe it. "No one forces you to any line of conduct. You are the mistress of your own actions. Think calmly, think reasonably of your situation, and do not agitate yourself thus without cause. It is true," he continued, seeing her tears flow with less emotion, — "it is true, your situation is a very painful one. You have to decide upon the life or death, to condemn or

to acquit a man whom, perhaps, you love — to whom, perhaps, you have promised your hand; and if you would save him from a death of horror and disgrace you must give that hand to another. It is a dreadful choice, indeed, for a young creature of ardent affections; but yet you have to consider that it may be looked upon in some sort as a boon, that, by this sacrifice of yourself, you have an opportunity of giving him life. If you refuse to make the sacrifice, he is lost to you by death; you can never be his; he can never be yours. You may rescue him from destruction, by what we must consider the gift of a widowed hand."

"To his murderer!" replied Kate, bitterly. "Let me think, Sir. Let me think in silence for a moment. My decision will soon be made, and when made it will be irrevocable;" and once more pressing her hands upon her burning brow and eyes, she remained for several minutes without uttering a word. It is impossible to describe the anguish of that moment. To say that the thoughts which crossed her brain — the feelings that passed through her heart — seemed like brands of fire, scorching and withering as they went, were but a poor expression of her sufferings. There was a terrible struggle too — a struggle for calmness, for a mastery over herself and her own emotions — a struggle for the full use of her own intellect, that she might see the whole, and act upon the united dictates of reason and affection; and yet the tumult of agitating passions almost drowned the voice of the mind.

At length she conquered; and, taking away her hands from her face, she said abruptly, and in that tone of command which despair will sometimes assume, "You said you had proofs that this man is entirely at the command of Sir Theodore Broughton — that Colonel Lutwich's life or death, in short, are at his disposal. Show me the proofs."

"Read that paper, Madam," said Mr. Brown, choosing one from the bundle in his hand: "it must satisfy you on that score, I think."

Kate took it — gazed at it — wiped away the tears that obscured her sight — gazed at it again, and read the promise given by the man Havant, and signed with his name, to place himself completely in the power of Sir Theodore Broughton. It seemed all too clear — too certain. There was no hope, no chance of removing the man's evidence, without the consent of her persecutor. She shuddered as she read. Then, relapsing into thought again, she pressed one hand upon her heart, still holding the paper in the other, till her meditation was broken by her companion gently taking the document from her.

Kate started, gazed at him wildly for an instant, and then, resuming a cold, calm air, she said, "I see there is no other hope. I will not say, Sir, what I think of the conduct which has been pursued towards me, for my resolution is taken. I will save him at any cost. Yet I must not and will not deceive Sir Theodore Broughton. I *have* loved — I do *love*, Colonel Lutwich. Were I to say otherwise, I should tell a falsehood. You may tell Sir Theo-

dore, that if this cold, unwilling form is all he asks, I am ready to give it, as the price of the life he has aimed at but too well. Nay, more, I will strive to do my duty to him as his wife, and to forget the past. More I cannot say. But I must have security, Sir, that Colonel Lutwich is safe; for the man who would act thus, would commit any other act to gratify his passions. I neither can nor will marry him till the prisoner is acquitted."

"That will be easily arranged, my dear young lady," replied the other; "you do indeed make a noble and a generous sacrifice. This is real love. However, you must pardon me if I act as a lawyer, and take securities also. It might happen — though I am sure it would not happen with you — that by persuasions and representations of friends, a young lady so situated, when she saw her end accomplished, and her lover acquitted, might refuse to ratify the contract."

"Be under no fear, Sir," replied Kate, with a slightly scornful look, "I am not accustomed to violate my word; and I promise by all I hold sacred, so help me God, if, by Sir Theodore's means, and the removal of this base wretch from England, Colonel Lutwich is acquitted, I will become the wife of him who sent you, whenever he chooses to demand my hand."

"Then, of course, you will not object to give that pledge in writing," said Mr. Brown; "I must satisfy Sir Theodore by something more than my bare assurance; and, indeed, it were better, otherwise he may be tempted to keep the

man in England till the trial, and then some fatal accident might happen, by which William Havant would be compelled to come forward and give evidence."

"What I have said that I will write," replied Kate; "but no more, Sir."

"I must also require that you do not see Colonel Lutwich during his imprisonment," said the other; "people in his situation always entertain hopes that are only dispelled by a court of justice and the black cap."

Kate hesitated, but her spirit was weary and worn out, and she thought it was little worth while to struggle now. The man who was with her saw his advantage; and, as those who are much accustomed to deal with people of less cunning know well how, he gained step by step, she promised to consent that the marriage should be private, if Sir Theodore required it, in consideration of his being under age; and indeed there was nothing short of falsehood or evil, which she would not have promised at that moment to save Lutwich from the fate that menaced him. The terrible engagement which she had entered into, seemed to leave every other point in her fate quite in insignificance; and her whole heart was filled with the indifference of despair. She demanded, however, and steadily adhered to that demand, before she fixed her name to the paper which her visitor drew out, that he should sign a solemn pledge that William Havant should be sent at once out of England. Mr. Brown hesitated strangely, however, and thereby suggested doubts which confirmed her resolution.

He then affected anger, putting up the papers as if to go, and Kate terrified, but yet determined, called him back, saying, "Stay, Sir. I will myself write the promise you require, inserting in it the conditions I think fit. If it then suit you, well, if not, I cannot help it; for I will not at once put my own fate, and the life of Colonel Lutwich, in the hands of a man who has shown how basely he can use an accidental advantage."

Sitting down at the table, on which were pen and ink, she wrote for a few minutes with a firm hand, then paused an instant, dated it, and affixed her name. "There," she said, "read it. If it will do, well — if not, tear it and leave me."

"It will do quite well, Madam," replied her companion. "The man shall be sent out of the country before to-morrow night. I only hesitated, because I could not affix Sir Theodore's name to the paper, or any other, indeed, except my own; for that would be forgery, and poor Thomas Brown, attorney-at-law, has no power. I may rely then, I think, completely upon your keeping this promise, if, in consequence of this witness's absence, Colonel Lutwich is liberated or acquitted."

"I have pledged myself as solemnly as words can do it," replied Kate, "and have called God to witness. I can say no more;" and she rose from her seat, as if to show that their interview was at an end.

Her visitor then withdrew, passed through the little vestibule, and entered a hackney coach which was waiting for

him. "Back again," he said, as the coachman closed the door; and as soon as the vehicle drove on, he laughed gaily, and threw the wig and the spectacles into the opposite seat, displaying the merry dissolute face of Doctor Gamble.

In the mean time, Louisa Lisle sat anxiously waiting for Kate Malcolm's return. She heard the door of the house shut, and the coach drive away, but Kate did not appear; and after waiting five or ten minutes more, she timidly approached the dining-room and went in. Kate Malcolm was lying insensible on the floor, and some time elapsed before she could be restored to consciousness.

CHAPTER XV.

FOR a time we must leave Kate Malcolm and the sad events which surrounded her, and turn to another scene not quite so gloomy as those in which she was placed, yet far from gay. It is true the aspect of everything around was cheerful. The morning light was shining upon the green leaves and through the old trees of Dunsmore Park; and it found its way, tempered, into the breakfast-room, where, with all the pleasant accessories of wealth, the family of Sir Charles Chevenix were assembled to partake of the bright first meal of the day. The whole air was tuneful with the songs of birds, and perfumed with the breath of flowers; and the herds of deer moving across the picture before the windows, the busy rooks cawing and fluttering in the distant rookery, a tall peacock sweeping the dewy grass with his gemmed train, and the squirrels running across the green, and then swarming up the pines, gave a gay and pleasant aspect to the whole. But Sir Charles himself was anxious for his daughter; and Lady Chevenix was very uneasy at Mary's changed looks and grave, nay, melancholy mood. The objects that had pleased her, pleased her no more; the studies she had delighted in wearied instead of amusing; the book and the pencil were thrown by; and the very wing of fancy seemed heavy and oppressed, unless,

indeed, it soared when she stood silently gazing forth from the window; but if it did, it must have been with a melancholy flight.

She was now seated opposite her father, tasting but little of that which was before her, and striving to talk cheerfully, but often losing herself in thought. Sir Charles saw the effort and was pained; so that it was a relief to him when a servant brought in the letters.

"There, that is for you, Mary," he said. "What hands women are now learning to write, as tall, and stiff, and straight as a regiment of grenadiers. When I was young, the *o's* and the *a's* were as fat as aldermen, and the *l's* and *b's* as crooked as a dog's tail."

Thus saying, he threw the letter across the table to his daughter, gave another to Lady Chevenix, and proceeded to open one which was addressed to himself. It was merely some formal notification, and soon read; and when he had done he raised his eyes again to Mary's face. They remained fixed upon her for some time, while she continued to read with a straining eye and changing colour; and Sir Charles saw that there was something moved her greatly in the contents of the letter, but he took no notice.

"Sir Harry is somewhat better, Charles," said Lady Chevenix; and as she spoke she remarked how steadily her husband was gazing at Mary, and her eyes followed his. "What is the matter, my dear child?" cried Lady Chevenix at once; "something pains or agitates you?"

"Both, my dear mother, both," replied Mary; "but let me read it out. It is a sad letter, indeed."

Mary read on, and when she had done she gave the letter to her father, and wiped some tears from her eyes.

"Who is it from?" asked Lady Chevenix, while Sir Charles read the letter almost as eagerly as his daughter.

"From poor Kate Malcolm," replied Mary, with her hand trembling, as it lay lightly on the table. "Mrs. Lisle is dead! she died suddenly — in a moment; and, I am sorry to say, Colonel Lutwich is in prison upon some terrible charge affecting his life."

Great was Lady Chevenix's astonishment; for Colonel Lutwich had been an especial favourite of hers; and when Sir Charles had done, she also asked to see the letter.

"I must go to London directly," said Sir Charles, as he gave it to her. "If the facts be as Kate states them, my evidence will be most important to poor Lutwich. He could not have committed this crime at the time stated, for he was at Jarvis's within half an hour after, and it would take an hour to ride the distance by any road I know; and he rose and rang the bell sharply."

"Pray let me go with you, papa," said Mary, raising her beautiful eyes to his face, "I may be of some use, at least as far as consolation goes, to poor Kate; for Mrs. Lisle's death must have made a terrible change. Pray let me go."

"With all my heart, my love," replied Sir Charles; "will you come too, mamma?"

But Lady Chevenix was not fond of sudden movements; she had so many things to do at home; it would take such a time to pack up her clothes; her maid was not prepared — in short, there were a hundred objections; and it was decided that Sir Charles and Mary should go together, while she remained at the park. A servant was despatched instantly to Stratton for post-horses, and after some commonplace comments upon Kate's letter, Lady Chevenix left the room. Mary was about to follow; but her father called her back, and walked into the bay window. When, with a still varying cheek, she came near him, Sir Charles threw his arm round her, saying, "Did you observe nothing in that letter, my dear Mary, beside what we have spoken of?"

Mary was silent, and her father went on saying, "Come, my dear child, let us have perfect confidence in each other. Your little friend here, Kate, is evidently in love with Lutwich — I should think engaged to him — I judge by the tone of her letter, rather than the words she makes use of. If so, Mary, I have done injustice to Reginald Lisle. Have not you done so, too, my love?"

Mary wept, and leaned her forehead against her father's bosom. He pressed her kindly to his heart; and that tender movement gave her strength to say, "I am bewildered; but I judged principally by what you told me, my dear father. Now, I do not know what to think."

"We have both been mistaken, dear Mary," said Sir Charles; "but this may be amended. Be assured, my love,

your happiness shall ever be your father's first object; but I thought I was best consulting it when I told you what I believed to be the truth. I did not, indeed, know that this had gone so deeply as I have lately seen, with pain, it has gone; but of that more as we drive along, my dear — now run away and get ready."

With all possible despatch, Sir Charles Chevenix and his daughter set out, Mary with a heart much lightened, but still sorely agitated between hope and fear; and her father, thoughtful, and, for him, very grave.

The first two miles passed nearly in silence; but at length, Sir Charles laid his hand upon his daughter's, and said: "Now tell me all, my dear Mary. Shut not up your feelings in your own heart, like a dormouse in a cage; but let me have a peep at them, too, my child. You know, I think, that my love for you is not of that selfish kind which seeks the gratification either of passion or prejudice, rather than the happiness of its object. What has passed between you and Lisle, Mary?"

"I cannot recall his words, my dear father, or my own," replied Mary; "I have often tried to do so since in vain; but I will own, I was convinced, from all he said, that he loved me and would seek my hand."

"And you loved him and told him so?" said Sir Charles.

Mary's cheek burned a good deal, but she replied frankly, "I did love him — I do love him; and I let him see that it was so, though, perhaps, I might not exactly say the words."

"You should have told me all this, Mary," said her father, gravely.

"I thought he would do so," answered Mary, simply.

"Ay, and we prevented him," said Sir Charles; "well, well, we are always making mistakes in life, and then mending what we have broken."

"Perhaps, too, mamma's conduct alarmed him," rejoined Mary, in a low tone; "she was, certainly, very cold to him when she discovered who he was. Indeed, her feelings frightened me, and make me fearful still. I do not think she would ever consent, even if he were to wish it now."

"Pooh, pooh!" said Sir Charles, "your dear mother will not oppose my wishes and yours too. As to Lisle himself, I must find some means of coming to an explanation with him."

"But he is out of England," said Mary, sadly; "did you not see, Kate mentions that he has gone abroad — sad, I dare say, and thinking me very capricious?"

Sir Charles had not seen or remarked the part of Kate's letter she spoke of; and it was re-read. "Well, I must write to him," he said, when he had done; but Mary exclaimed, "Oh, no! Do not, dear papa. He will think it very strange, and suppose, perhaps, that I —"

"Mary, Mary!" said Charles, "take my word for it, my dear girl, perfect frankness in matters of love is ever the best, the noblest, and the surest way. I will say nothing that can compromise your delicacy, depend upon it; but I will tell him that you have now informed me of all that

had passed between you, and that I — filled with a prepossession of his being engaged to Kate Malcolm — had given you the same mistaken impression I had received. That explained, he will see the motives on which we acted; and the rest must come from himself, my child. But I will not hold the worth of my Mary so cheap, as to suppose that any man on earth with a free heart could possess her, and not strive to do so."

Thus ended their conversation for the time; and four horses and well paid post-boys brought the father and daughter rapidly to London. It was near midnight, however, when the carriage stopped at the house of Sir Charles Chevenix; and as his arrival was unexpected, the clock had struck two before Mary's head rested on her pillow. She was very much tired; but she was still agitated. She thought of how unkind her conduct must have appeared to Reginald Lisle; she thought of how sad his heart must have been, if she might judge from her own, when he left the shores of England; and tears and bitter meditations occupied many of the hours of darkness. She was up before her father, however, and waited for his appearance with anxiety, for Mary was not quite satisfied yet. There was a shade of doubt still upon her mind; she feared that she might be deluding herself with false hopes of Reginald's unchanged affections; and the smallest particle of uncertainty is a heavy load to the heart of love. When Sir Charles did come down, he was somewhat tardy at breakfast and, Mary thought, very grave; but, when he had

done, it was arranged that he should proceed to see Lutwich, and take whatever steps might be necessary in order to be present at the next examination before the magistrates, while Mary, with a fresh pair of post-horses, set out to visit Kate Malcolm.

Mary's heart beat a good deal, poor girl, as the carriage rolled on, and her thoughts were very busy with the interview that was about to take place; but when she stopped before Mrs. Lisle's cottage, and looking out beheld the closed windows, she reproached herself with selfishness for having forgotten that she was approaching the house of mourning. When the bell was rung, and the servant appeared, he said, in answer to her inquiries, that Miss Malcolm was ill in bed. "She has been very unwell, Ma'am," he said, "since yesterday morning."

"I think, if she is well enough to receive any one, she will admit me," said Mary, "and I much wish to see her. Pray send up word that Miss Chevenix is below."

"Will you step into the drawing-room for a moment, Ma'am, and I will see?" said the man; and Mary followed him instinctively.

When the man opened the door of the room for her to enter, he paused suddenly, as if he saw something there he had not expected; but Mary was already on the threshold; and she beheld seated at a table, with her head resting on her hand, a young girl, pale, slight, and shadowy, but bearing in her features a sufficient resemblance to Reginald Lisle to show at once that she was his sister.

Mary gave way to the feelings of her heart; and, while the servant was beginning an excuse for showing her to that room, on the plea that he did not know Miss Lisle was down, she advanced at once towards her, and, taking her hand kindly, kissed her pale cheek.

"You do not know me," said Mary, "but I think your brother must have mentioned me. I am Mary Chevenix."

The least thing agitated poor Louisa's shaken nerves; and she trembled without answering. "I did not intend to intrude upon you, dear Miss Lisle," continued Mary, "but having come up to town to see our poor friend Kate Malcolm, I am unwilling to go away without doing so, though the servant says she is ill. Shall I leave you?"

"Oh, no, no, stay!" said Louisa; "I know all about you now; but the sight of a stranger frightened me. — Send up, and let Miss Malcolm know that Miss Chevenix is here," she continued, speaking to the servant; and then turning to Mary again, she added, "Kate is indeed very ill. I never saw such a change as has taken place in her since yesterday."

"But what is the matter?" asked Mary, seating herself by Louisa's side. "Has any fresh misfortune happened?"

"I think I might tell you," replied Louisa, "for I know she loves you very much; but yet I am so ignorant of these things, I might do harm. I may at least say this,

that poor Kate was yesterday called upon to make a most terrible sacrifice of all her dearest feelings, to save from destruction the man she loves. She will herself tell you more, however, I dare say. She spoke of rising, so I am sure she will see you; but I persuaded her to rest till dinner time, for she is certainly very ill."

"If you will step up, Madam," said old Mrs. Jones, appearing at the door, "Miss Malcolm will see you;" and in another minute Mary was by Kate's bedside. The poor girl was as pale as death; all her warm colour gone, except when for a moment a slight flush crossed her cheek, and passed away again.

Mary kissed her tenderly; and her heart, as she did so, reproached her for the feelings with which she had parted from her. "Dear Kate!" she said, "I am really much grieved to find you so ill. But do not give way, Kate. Papa and I set out as soon as your letter arrived — we were not more than an hour in the house after it came — and he speaks with good hope; for he says that it is impossible this charge against Colonel Lutwich can be true, as there was not time for him to reach Jarworth Park, if he had been guilty. You know that there is some one very like him."

Kate smiled faintly, saying, "You are very kind, dear Mary, and so is Sir Charles also; but, alas! you do not know all. Colonel Lutwich is safe, I trust; but my peace is at an end for ever."

She did not weep, but closed her eyes, and remained for some moments in bitter thought.

Mary gazed upon her sorrowfully, and asked herself, "How can I soothe and console her? — No way without knowing the whole — and how can I learn that? — Perhaps by making my own confession first, and trying to atone for my unkind feelings towards her when we parted."

"Kate," she continued aloud, "look at me, dear Kate. I have come to tell you a tale of my own weakness and folly, and to ask your pardon for coldness and unkindness which you did not merit. I am sure you will give it me; and I think, as a proof that you do forgive me, you will open your heart to me in return."

"I forgive you, Mary!" exclaimed Kate, turning round and gazing at her. "I have nothing to forgive, unless kindness and generosity be an offence."

"Listen to me then, dear Kate," replied Mary Chevenix, "and you will soon see what you have to forgive. I have been jealous of you, Kate — foolishly, blindly jealous, and have made myself wretched by my own fault. I have wished I had never seen you — oh, I cannot tell you what I have felt towards you. But listen, and I will try to explain all;" and, with a burning cheek, Mary poured forth her little history, concealing nothing, but, as if in expiation of the feelings with which she reproached herself, aggravating rather than diminishing any faults attributable to herself.

"I have but one excuse to offer," said Mary, in the end, "and that is, dear Kate, that some of your own words helped to deceive me, and your own looks still more. Do you remember a conversation we had on the evening of that day when you returned with my father to Jarworth Park, and when I spoke to you about Reginald's coming to your assistance at Dunstable?"

"No," said Kate, "it was Lady Chevenix spoke to me about that."

"Yes, but I spoke to you afterwards, when mamma had left the room," replied Mary, "and asked you, if he had not fallen a little in love with you?"

"Not Captain Lisle!" exclaimed Kate eagerly; "you never mentioned his name."

Mary put her hand to her brow and thought. "I remember I did not," she said; "but it was of him I spoke."

"I thought you meant Colonel Lutwich," said Kate, gazing at her.

"Fool that I have been!" cried Mary — "oh, far more foolish than I thought; and, if I am miserable, it is my own fault."

"Oh, do not think so," replied Kate; "I trust you will be very, very happy, dear Mary; and you must try to be so, for you have everything to brighten hope. I have no hope; and yet I will endeavour to be contented as far as possible; for that is a duty, and to brood over disappointments is a sin."

"But why no hope?" asked Mary; and, with kind and gentle persuasions, she won from poor Kate Malcolm some detail of the facts with which the reader has already been made acquainted. Kate did not, indeed, tell all distinctly; first, because it was too painful to pause long upon; and secondly, because she thought it better to conceal the actual motives which had been held out to induce her to promise her hand to a man she abhorred. What she did tell she told truly; and she did not even hide from Mary that she was concealing something; but, when she spoke of the transaction with Doctor Gamble, whom she represented, as she believed him to be, as a lawyer of the name of Brown, she merely said that he had proved to her most distinctly that the only means of saving Lutwich from an ignominious death, was to give in writing the pledge he dictated. She wept a little, but not much, and then added, "I was thus obliged, dear Mary, to choose between leaving him to his terrible fate, and being separated from him by his death, or to sacrifice the remaining years of my life to a fate, compared with which my own death would be a blessing. And yet I felt that there was no choice either, that I was bound by every principle to one course — that, if I really loved him, there was no alternative."

"Oh, noble, dear, generous girl!" exclaimed Mary. "All I hope Kate, is, that they have not deceived you, and led you to make such a sacrifice of yourself without an absolute necessity."

"Oh, no!" replied Kate Malcolm; "of that I am certain."

Some words which Lutwich himself let drop accidentally, showed me that this man had him entirely in his power; but it is only an aggravation of my misery to think that I am doomed to be the wife of one who could act so basely as he has done. — Come in!" she added, hearing a knock at her room door; and a maid-servant entered with two letters. One bore a distant post-mark; the other none, and the first Kate opened immediately. The effect produced upon her may be imagined by the reader, when he knows that it was the letter of Mr. Mullins which then met her eye, with Mary Chevenix sitting beside her. For an instant she felt stunned; but the next moment the habitual devotion of years lent her strength. She had so often been called upon, at once to endure and to support, that it was nothing new. She folded the letter carefully and placed it beneath her pillow, gazed sadly at Mary with tearful eyes, and then thought, "No! Her father must break it to her. My task is with Louisa — the bereaved, indeed."

She had not voice to speak; and the other letter lay upon the bed unopened, with the address uppermost, till Mary pointed to it, saying, "That is surely my father's hand. Kate took it up and opened it mechanically. She read it twice, the first time unable to fix her attention so far as even to gather the meaning; but, at length, with a feeling of relief, she saw that it afforded an excuse for terminating an interview which, burdened as she was with the terrible tidings of Reginald Lisle's fate, she feared to

protract. The note was very brief, and in the following terms: —

“DEAR MISS MALCOLM,

“Will you do me the favour, as soon as you receive this, to put yourself into a post-chaise, and meet me at the house of Sir Harry Jarvis? Your presence there is absolutely needful; and I shall wait your coming, for I have news of importance for you, and not a moment is to be lost. If Mary is with you when this arrives, tell her to go home and not wait dinner, or sit up for me, as I do not know when I shall be able to quit Jarworth. Lose no time, my dear Kate, for you may be assured that, without necessity, you would not be thus hurried by,

“Your affectionate friend,

“CHARLES CHEVENIX.”

“I must rise directly, Mary,” said Kate, giving her Sir Charles’s note to read; but Mary proposed a plan which Kate had not thought of, yet could not well decline. “Our carriage is at the door with post-horses,” she said; “dress yourself at once, Kate, and come with me. You can set me down in Grosvenor-square, and then go on.”

“I must speak with poor Louisa first,” said Kate; “I may detain you some time — I have a bitter task to perform towards her.”

“No new misfortune?” said Mary.

"Yes, indeed," replied Kate; but Mary had no clue to guide her fears to the truth; and Kate rose and dressed herself almost in silence, for her thoughts were very busy and her frame was weak.

When her toilet was complete, she left Mary for a few minutes, and sent for the old housekeeper, Mrs. Jones, into another room. Their conversation was very earnest; but the good woman dissuaded her strongly from even hinting the facts to Louisa till after Mrs. Lisle's funeral. "Pray do not, Miss," she said, with the tears in her eyes, "it would kill my poor young lady. If Mr. Mullins is angry, I will take all the blame; for I know her better than he does."

It was difficult for Kate to decide. She saw that notwithstanding Mr. Mullins's assurance, that there was no hope left, he still entertained some, however faint and doubtful; and she knew what a terrible thing long-protracted apprehension is. How was she, then, she asked herself, to prepare Louisa's mind for what might be the fatal truth, without inflicting upon her anguish more severe than even the truth itself would produce. She paused, therefore, some time, in doubt; and at length, calculating that the poor girl's uncle could not travel to Plymouth and thence to London and arrive before the following night she resolved to defer all reference to the subject till after her return from Jarworth Park, which plan would, at least, afford time for deliberation. Announcing this determination to the housekeeper, she proceeded to inform Louisa of

her sudden call to the house of Sir Harry Jarvis; and promising to return as early as possible, she set out with Mary Chevenix.

Mary's mind was lightened by all that had passed between her and Kate; hope dawned again in her heart; and though she sympathized sincerely with her fair companion, yet the brighter colouring which had come over her own prospects, communicated itself to the view she took of Kate's situation. Hoping for herself, she hoped for Kate too — that Lutwich would be saved — that something might be done to annul the fatal promise which had been given — that she might yet see Kate as happy as she deserved to be. She had no grounds for such hopes, it is true, but yet, when her own fate seemed to be suddenly cleared of its darkest clouds, she could not but dream that it might be so also with that of Kate Malcolm. Her cheerfulness, quiet as it was, was painful to Kate; and more than once she said to herself, "Oh, if Mary did but know the terrible secret of that letter! — But it will be told her only too soon."

The journey to Jarworth Park seemed longer than ever; but, at length, it was accomplished, and as the carriage drove up to the house, Kate saw a post-chaise just pulling up at the door. A gentleman sprang out, and rang the bell; and then, turning round, Sir Charles Chevenix approached the side of his own carriage in which she was and said, "I have seen Lutwich, my dear. He told me

to say he had received your note, but did not quite understand it."

"I am not surprised, Sir Charles," said Kate; "I fear it was hardly intelligible."

"Of that, more hereafter," said Sir Charles, in his usual rapid way; "now alight, my dear, and come with me. The servant is at the door, I see."

CHAPTER XVI.

DRAWING Kate's arm through his own, Sir Charles Chevenix walked up to the door of Sir Harry Jarvis's house, at which by this time was standing his old butler with another of his servants, while in the vestibule beyond appeared the same valet-looking man whom Kate had seen when last she was at Jarworth Park.

"Oh, Sir Charles, I am exceedingly glad to see you," said the butler; "my poor master is very ill still."

"Is he awake?" demanded Sir Charles Chevenix.

"I believe so, Sir," replied the servant; "but I have not been permitted to see or attend upon him for several days."

"He is awake, Sir," said the footman; "for as I passed the door this minute, I heard him speaking."

"Then I will see him," said Sir Charles; and turning towards Kate, he added in a low voice, "there is something wrong here."

At that moment the valet advanced, saying, without any mark of want of respect, "I am sorry, Sir, you cannot see Sir Harry Jarvis, as I was directed to say, that no one could be admitted to him in his present state, except the medical men."

"Indeed!" replied Sir Charles, looking at him from head to foot; "and pray who may you be? Your face is new to me."

"I am Mr. Eaton's servant, Sir," replied the man: "Mr. Eaton is Sir Harry's cousin."

"Oh, I know him!" replied Sir Charles Chevenix; "but now, my good fellow, have the kindness to get out of my way, for it is my intention to see Sir Harry Jarvis, my oldest and dearest friend, whether you or Mr. Eaton, or any one else in the world says, Nay."

"I cannot permit it, Sir," said the man, still standing before him; "my orders are distinct."

"Are they?" said Sir Charles, slipping Kate's arm out of his own, and advancing upon the valet: "Now, Sir, my orders to you are distinct. Out of the way this instant!"

The man remained firm, however; there was a step and a voice heard upon the landing-place above; and with one blow Sir Charles knocked the valet backwards upon the large mat at the foot of the stairs.

At the same moment a thin gentleman-like man, with an exceeding keen sharp-looking face, came down with a quick step, exclaiming, "What is all this? — Sir Charles Chevenix! — I am astonished, Sir!"

"And so am I, Mr. Eaton," replied the baronet; "most exceedingly astonished that any one, with your authority, should attempt to prevent my entrance into the house of my oldest and dearest friend. I have, however, removed

the impediment, and shall now go and see him — come Kate, my dear.”

“I must beg to say, you cannot, Sir Charles,” replied Mr. Eaton, who had cast one glance to the face of Kate Malcolm, which was quite sufficient, however, to make him turn first very pale and then very red; “Sir Harry is sleeping, and must not be woke on any account. Perfect tranquillity, the physicians assure me, is absolutely necessary to his recovery. You cannot, and you shall not disturb him.”

“Shall not, Sir!” exclaimed Sir Charles, with his eyes flashing: “think yourself lucky I do not throw you out of that door upon the drive.”

“Sir, you shall be brought to account for this conduct!” cried Mr. Eaton, bristling up and looking very fierce.

“Whenever you please, Mr. Eaton,” replied Sir Charles, “in an hour or two hence, if you like. In the mean while, you will have the goodness to move out of my way. Sir Harry Jarvis is awake — of that I already have information.”

“But, Sir, you are not aware —” said the other, still keeping his place upon the last step of the stairs.

“I am aware of more than you imagine, Mr. Eaton,” replied the baronet. “Now, Sir, I should be very sorry to use your nose as a handle for leading you out of the house; but I shall be compelled to do so, if you detain me one instant longer.”

"Well, Sir, well," cried the other; "you are responsible for the consequences to Sir Harry Jarvis, and shall be answerable to me for your language and ungentlemanly conduct. I am not disposed to increase the uproar you have already made in this house, by opposing your mad and cruel proceedings farther;" and he moved out of the way, with a sullen air.

"Come, Kate," said Sir Charles, turning round; but as Kate, with a trembling and agitated frame was following, the old butler stepped forward, and taking the letter she had given him out of his pocket, he said, "I have been prevented, Ma'am, by that gentleman from delivering this to Sir Harry, and received warning from him — which I do not choose to take — even for taking it from you, having been watched when you gave it."

"You are an impudent scoundrell!" exclaimed Mr. Eaton, vehemently; but without taking any further notice of that gentleman, Sir Charles said, "Bring the letter with you, my dear. It may be needful. You follow us to the door of your master's room, my good fellow, and see that we are not interrupted."

"Oh, I have no intention of interrupting you, Sir," said Mr. Eaton; "at least not at present. That young woman, however, may find her proceedings checked when she least expects it."

Kate's spirit rose. She remembered her father and that man's conduct towards him; and looking him full in the face, she said, "For shame, Sir! for shame!"

A reply seemed struggling to his lips, but he turned upon his heel suddenly, and beckoning to his valet, walked into the library.

"A sharp engagement, my dear Kate," said Sir Charles, in a low tone, as he led her up the stairs; "but a complete victory, I trust. The field is clear of the enemy, at all events."

"I really do not understand it at all," said Kate.

"You will understand more presently," replied her gallant friend; "at present we must lose no time, for we cannot depend upon the account of Sir Harry's health;" and he quietly approached a mahogany door at the end of the wide corridor in which they now were. "Keep a little behind me, Kate, but come in," he said; and then turning the handle of the lock very gently, he opened the door.

The curtains of the room were partly drawn, and the windows were open to admit the air. There was sufficient light to display everything in the room, which presented the ordinary aspect of a sick chamber, with a large massive four-post bed at the farther side, from which a nurse was just withdrawing with a tea-cup in her hand.

"Some one came in? — who is that?" said a feeble voice from the bed; and while the woman stared, Sir Charles advanced with a quick step, saying, "It is I, Jarvis, — your old friend, Chevenix. I thought you would be glad to see me, and that the face of an old companion could do you no harm: so I forced my way up in spite of all sorts of remonstrances."

"I am delighted, Chevenix," said Sir Harry Jarvis, in a glad tone; "this is very kind of you, indeed. It will do me more good than all the medicines in the world. The foolish doctor wrote to Eaton when I was first attacked, and he has come up, and bores me to death."

Kate, as she stood near the door, could see Sir Charles Chevenix smile gaily as he sat down by the bed-side. "Well, Jarvis, you do not seem so ill after all," he said, leaning over the bed; "let us have a little more light, my good woman. I want to see my old friend's face somewhat better. You can bear a little more light, I dare say."

"Oh, yes! the light does not hurt me," said the old baronet; "but do not lean over me or touch me, Chevenix. They say the fever is very infectious. I have been seriously ill; but I am somewhat better now, my dear boy, though weak as an infant — weaker than you were as an infant, for I recollect, when I had you in my arms at your christening, you kicked so that I could hardly hold you;" and the old man laughed.

"Well, you look better than I expected," said his friend, as some more light was admitted; "you'll do very well now; and we'll soon get your strength up."

"Seventy-three! seventy-three! my dear boy," said Sir Harry; "no getting over that disease, Charles," replied Sir Harry, but not at all sadly.

"Won't you take a seat, Miss?" said the nurse, putting a chair for Kate.

"Who is that?" exclaimed the sick man; "have you got any one with you? Is it Mary?"

"No, not Mary," replied Sir Charles; "but one who is nearer and should be dearer to you, my dear friend, than Mary. — It is Kate;" and he beckoned her forward.

"Keep away, keep away!" cried Sir Harry, as soon as she approached within his sight; "the fever is very infectious. Chevenix, you are mad."

"I am not at all afraid of it," said Kate, advancing quietly and gracefully.

"But I am for you, my dear young lady," said Sir Harry; "but what is it you mean, Charles? — Nearer and dearer to me! A hint of the same kind was given to me before; but I made inquiries, and —"

"They were frustrated by a pre-arranged plan," replied Sir Charles Chevenix. "I neither wish to hurt any one, nor to prejudice any questions which I trust you will soon have an opportunity of investigating yourself. But, in the mean time, I assure you — and you will take my word, I know — that this is Kate Malcolm, the only child of your favourite niece, who married, while you were in India, Ensign Marsham, of the Twenty-third. He afterwards took the name of Malcolm, by permission of the crown, the warrant for which I have seen this day at the Herald's College."

"But the register of her burial, as Lucy Marsham was shown to me," said Sir Harry; "she never took the name of Malcolm."

"No," replied Sir Charles, "but her husband and her daughter did. The warrant authorizes Frederick Marsham and his daughter Catherine, by his marriage with Lucy Carr, deceased, to take and assume the name and arms of Malcolm, and it is dated fourteen years ago, when this dear child was barely five years old."

"If that be any proof," said Kate, in a low, quiet tone — though she was much agitated, as the reader may suppose — "I have here Mr. Eaton's letter, in which he calls me 'cousin.'"

"The proof is there," said Sir Harry, raising his thin, pale hand, and pointing to her face, "I saw it from the first hour I beheld her: but what a villain this man must be! He always led me to believe that my poor Lucy had died without a child, a few years after her marriage, and that Marsham was dead too. But now, my dear Kate, go away into another room: you have been here too long already. Mrs. Ward, give her some of that stuff William Eaton uses to prevent infection."

"I have no fear, indeed," said Kate; "and do forgive me, my dear uncle, if I prove disobedient to your first commands. I am resolved to stay and help this good lady to nurse you till you are quite well. I am accustomed to nursing — indeed I am; and Mr. Eaton, I am sure, will not have the heart to prevent me."

"He will not have the power," said Sir Harry, with a bitter smile, which sat strangely upon his mild and gentle features: "he has imposed upon me, and tried to wrong

you; but that is past, and he shall now quit my house. Well, stay, my child; stay, since you desire it. I trust God will not take you from me now."

"Shall I go and turn him out?" asked Sir Charles Chevenix.

"No, no, Charles," said the old man; "the physician and apothecary will soon be here, and they shall carry my message. They will be glad of it; for the good doctor was very angry at his preventing me from having the quantity of wine ordered, when the complaint was at the worst. He pretended he thought it would heat me — and it saved my life. — There is the doctor's carriage, I believe."

He was silent, and the whole party listened; but the carriage wheels seemed to roll away from, rather than to, the house; and a moment after the sick man said, "I wish you would see for my old butler, Dixon, Charles. I am afraid he must be ill; he has not been near me for three or four days."

"Mr. Eaton would not let him in, your worship," said the nurse. "He declared his shoes made such a creaking, it disturbed you."

"I rather think he was more afraid of the creaking of a certain letter in his pocket," said Sir Charles, rising; "for Kate was here three or four days ago, it seems, and gave Dixon a letter for you, from poor Lutwich, who hunted out all the facts. However, Dixon is now keeping guard at the door."

The old servant was called in, and approached the side of his master's bed, with tears in his eyes. "I am very glad, indeed, Sir Harry, to see your honour so much better," said the man, after gazing a moment in his face. "You look quite a different man."

"I am much better, my good old friend," replied the baronet; "but as one can never tell what may happen from moment to moment, be so good, Dixon, as to tell John, the groom, to ride over to Barnet, as fast as he can go, and bring me, in a post-chaise, Mr. Groves, the attorney. Tell him that I wish to make a new will; for I find I have been imposed upon, Dixon. Let him bring his clerk with him, for a witness. — I thought I heard the doctor's carriage; who was it?"

"It was Mr. Eaton, your worship," said the butler, with a broad grin. "Mr. Eaton, and his valet, that Sir Charles knocked down, because he would not let him see you. They knew the game was up as soon as he did see you, and so they took themselves off, — Mr. Hicks with a precious black eye."

"Chevenix, Chevenix!" said Sir Harry, "you are always too hasty. Did not Mr. Eaton leave a letter or message for me, Dixon?"

"He only said, Sir, that he would not remain in a house where he had been so insulted," replied the butler; "and that he would write to your honour."

"Well, well, send the groom, Dixon, as I have said," answered his master. "I shall, of course, be willing to hear

reason; but I do not see, I confess, how his conduct and his words can be explained otherwise than as a gross imposition. And now, my dear niece, you go with Dixon, and get some refreshment. You look very pale, my love, much paler than when you were here before. This is my grand-niece, Dixon; look upon her as your future mistress."

"She's wonderful like poor Miss Lucy, Sir Harry," said the old butler; "I thought so from the first, and told Mrs. Williams so. Lord! how well I remember Miss Lucy, when I was under-footman at your father's, and what a pretty girl she was, and what a nice young lady too — every one loved her."

"This is her child," said Sir Harry, wiping away a tear from his eyes. "Now go, my love, go with him. I want to speak with Chevenix, and get him to make a memorandum or two for me. I have not been able to do anything since that man has been in the house."

"I may come back again soon?" asked Kate.

The invalid made a movement of assent, with a bland smile; and she left him.

When she and the butler were in the corridor, the old man seemed quite overpowered by his feelings. He took her hand and kissed it: but words failed him, and only muttering, "God bless you, Miss, God bless you!" he hurried down the stairs, and disappeared. Kate found her way alone to the drawing-room, where more than one little incident of the past flashed back upon memory, with one of

those strange pangs which dart across the breast, as if an arrow were shot into it, when things gone present themselves in painful contrast with the present. It may be asked if she had been happier when there before, a mere dependant upon the bounty of strangers, without one being upon earth on whom she seemed to have any real claim, than now the near relation of a kind and excellent man of great wealth, who acknowledged her with pride and pleasure? All her fate seemed totally changed, indeed, except in this one essential point of happiness, that strange chameleon gift varying under every circumstance of human life, different in different men, different in the same man at different periods, fixed and firm often in the midst of earthquake mutabilities; and yet changing, fading, vanishing, lost, under external alterations, which would seem to superficial eyes as mere dust and emptiness — the harmony of the heart, which one note out of tune will turn to discord.

Kate sat down, and wept with a long, painful, despairing flood of tears.

There were, however, certain principles in her heart which, however much she might be moved at times, always soon reasserted their sway. There were things which she considered duties; and yet she was not one of those cold slaves of formal precepts who act by rule, neglecting all the tenderer emotions, and the bright, real charities of life, in order to guide their conduct by a rigid measure. In truth, she extended far her notion of duties, taking in many things that the duty-mongers would judge superfluous. Kind-

ness, gentleness, meekness, patience, forgiveness, forgetfulness of injuries, candour, frankness, love for her fellow-creatures, efforts to make them happy, abstinence from all that could pain unnecessarily, or wound by a light word, she looked upon as duties, full as much as truth and honour, justice and probity. We are very apt to select our duties in this world, and that, too, with a partial eye. Kate looked to her Saviour's words, for those she was to practise, and tried at least to perform all which his words inculcated or implied.

After she had given way to her tears for a few minutes, she suddenly wiped them away, "I must write to Louisa. I cannot, I ought not to quit my uncle till he is somewhat better; but, perhaps, I can see her to-morrow for a few hours. I must tell Sir Charles Chevenix, too, of poor Captain Lisle's unhappy fate, and beg him to break it to Mary — perhaps to Louisa, also. Lutwich, too, I must write to; he did not understand that incoherent note I sent. But I had better not tell him all till the trial is over, lest he should do some rash thing in despair. God give me strength to go through all this!" and, seeking for writing materials, she commenced her task at once, and was still so employed when the old butler and another servant brought her in some refreshment.

Kate felt a loathing of the food set before her, however; and though she forced down a mouthful, and took some wine, when the men were gone, she could do no more, and recommenced the writing of her letters. As

she went on, she heard more than one carriage drive up to the house; but no one disturbed her; and when she had concluded, she rang to inquire if she could return to the room of her uncle.

"He has got the two doctors and the lawyer with him, Ma'am," said the butler; and Kate was obliged to rest satisfied. At length, however, just when the change had taken place in the landscape which announces that day is merging into evening, she heard steps approaching; and Sir Charles Chevenix, with three other gentlemen, entered the room. Her kind friend took her paternally in his arms, and kissed her.

"I wish you joy, my dear Kate," he said; "you are now, beyond all doubt and cavil, the heiress of my good friend Sir Harry; to the principal part of his landed estates in virtue of the entail, which, failing his issue, conveys them to you as the representative of his eldest sister; and to all his large personal property, in virtue of his will just signed. It is so simple that there can be no dispute; for ten lines, and a codicil referring to a few legacies, have done it all."

"But he is better?" asked Kate, eagerly looking to a grave man, whom she supposed to be the physician. "He will recover — oh! he will recover, will he not?"

"I trust so, Madam," replied the physician. "With very careful nursing, I see every probability of his doing so."

"Leave her to nurse him," said Sir Charles Chevenix, "and he will soon be well enough."

After a few words more with the physician and the lawyer, Sir Charles Chevenix was left alone with Kate, who charged him with her letter to Louisa, and then proceeded to tell him the intelligence conveyed to her by Mr. Mullins. Much to her relief, she found that Sir Charles was not altogether unprepared for such tidings.

"I saw a rumour of the kind," he said, "in the morning paper, before I left the house to-day; but I would not tell Mary, my dear Kate, nor will I, unless at your particular desire, say anything on the subject to Miss Lisle. Misfortunes never come too late, my dear girl; and when one must slay hope, it is better to do it at one blow than by slow torture. I was myself killed twice while I was in active service, and Lady Chevenix has since assured me that nothing could exceed the suffering she underwent during long alternations of hope and fear. Poor Lisle may yet be living, although it is certain that the *London* was run down a few nights ago by the *Russell*, and that a great number of persons perished. Let us have accurate information before we say anything, and let us also trust that others will not carry the news to poor Miss Lisle till it is fully confirmed."

Kate could not but own that her opinion coincided with his, and Sir Charles went on in a kindly tone to speak of her own appearance, and to urge her to take care of herself. She had no heart to enter into any explanations, nor, indeed, to make any promises, for she felt that health of body could hardly be expected when peace of

mind was gone. She would fain have asked questions regarding Lutwich, too; but her voice failed her; and she was glad to fly from subjects which produced so many emotions, by proposing to return to the chamber of Sir Harry Jarvis.

I must now confine myself to a brief summary of the events affecting poor Kate Malcolm, which took place during the next fortnight or three weeks; for, as the reader may perceive, this work is waning to its close, and the inexorable two volumes are nearly at an end. For the two next days, Kate tended her sick relation with the utmost care and tenderness, passing the greater part of every day, and a part of every night, by his bed-side. The wearied nurse thus had more opportunities of repose, and when the period of her watch came, of course performed her duties better.

In these circumstances, Sir Harry Jarvis rallied rapidly, and the third day of Kate's attendance, the physician declared that all danger of a relapse had passed away. He even sat up for some hours in bed, and declared that his rapid progress was entirely attributable to his dear Kate; and, in truth, the joy of finding her might have something to do with it. The morning of that third day, however, was a very anxious one for poor Kate Malcolm; for the second examination of Colonel Lutwich had taken place on the preceding evening, and she had not heard the result. About twelve, a brief note arrived from Sir Charles Chevenix, telling her that he would be at Jarworth in the

afternoon, and informing her that although the principal witness was still absent, and the bulk of evidence was given in favour of the prisoner, the magistrate had determined to commit him for trial.

"This, perhaps, is quite as well for Lutwich," said Sir Charles, in conclusion; "for no jury can convict upon such evidence, and once acquitted, he can never be troubled on the subject again."

The last words were certainly some consolation to poor Kate; but, nevertheless, the depression of her spirits seemed rather increasing than diminishing, throughout the whole of that morning. Her head ached violently, too; a terrible overpowering languor spread over all her frame. Slowly and with difficulty she dragged herself from place to place, and as she was sitting by the bed-side of Sir Harry, while the physician was speaking to him, a fit of shuddering seized her, which she could not restrain. The eye of the medical man was upon her at the moment; and after having said all he had to say to his patient, he came round and felt her pulse.

His face was very grave while he did so; but in the end, he said in a quiet tone, "If you will take my advice, my dear young lady, you will go to bed. You have fatigued yourself too much, and got a little cold. Sir Harry can quite well spare you, for to-morrow I shall let him rise for a few hours, and by timely care you may save yourself from a very bad cold."

"Perhaps it would be as well," replied Kate, who felt the impossibility of sitting up any longer, "if my dear uncle can really spare me."

Sir Harry took alarm immediately, and sent her to her room at once, asking the physician earnestly if he thought she was seriously ill. But the man of healing was also a very prudent man, and he replied according to the usual form, — "No, I trust not — only a little cold." But when he quitted his patient's room, he called the nurse out, and with a very serious air inquired whether she felt herself able to go through the attendance upon another case. Significant looks passed between the doctor and the nurse; but the latter replied, "I dare say I can, Sir. Do you think she has caught it?"

"Beyond a doubt," answered the physician; "she was apparently depressed and agitated when first she saw him, poor thing! and though she seems to have had no fear, yet she has now the fever upon her. Remember, however, Mrs. Ward — not a word to Sir Harry. If he inquires, say that it is a severe cold — tell him she is better, anything rather than let him know for some days how ill she is."

"Is it a bad kind, do you think, Sir?" inquired the nurse.

"I should think it may prove a much more severe case than his," answered the physician; "from the sharp and sudden rigours I observed. — Upon second thoughts, I had better send another attendant, while you remain with Sir Harry; for I should not wonder if violent delirium were to

come on to-night, and he must not know that you are wanted. Go and see if she is in bed, and I will come and speak with her."

As he prognosticated, before eleven o'clock that night, Kate Malcolm's consciousness of all around her was at an end, and she was raving in that frightful delirium which attends the worst class of typhus fever. Wild and horrible fancies presented themselves to her mind, and all that was painful in her situation was constantly present, aggravated by the imaginings of a disturbed intellect. She strove to rise; she raved of Lutwich and Sir Theodore Broughton; she thought she beheld the one at the place of execution, and the other standing by her bed-side. Gradually, however, with decreasing powers, the violence of her demeanour abated; low incoherent mutterings succeeded; her long delicate fingers picked at unseen objects on the bed-clothes; and, at the end of nine days, she fell into a state in which the flame of life hovered so faintly over the expiring lamp, that it was hardly possible to say whether she lived or not.

The physician himself had sat up with her during the whole of that night. It was the ninth; and the two nurses, as well as Sir Harry Jarvis — now well though weak, and aware of her situation — stood round her bed. The doctor's hand was on the pulse, expecting, in truth, to find the faint, fluttering, hardly perceptible thread cease to vibrate altogether. Suddenly, however, he felt a more distinct stroke, and then another. "Go and get me some brandy

Mrs. Ward," he said; "here is a slight reaction which must be encouraged — make haste."

The woman ran away with all speed, and brought what was required. A tea-spoonful was poured between the dry and parched lips, and an involuntary movement of the throat to swallow was seen; another spoonful, and another, was given; and then the physician put his hand upon the pulse again. Now, for the first time, he looked at Sir Harry Jarvis with a smile. "There is an improvement," he said; "slight, but decided."

The old man made no reply, but seating himself, continued to gaze upon her unconscious face for more than half an hour. "Does she not breathe more regularly?" he asked, at length, in a low voice.

"I think so," replied the physician, "and with a fuller inspiration."

"I think she is asleep," said the nurse; "you need not be afraid of waking her; for she got so deaf yesterday evening I could hardly make her hear."

"Indeed," said the physician, with a well-satisfied look. "Now mix some of the brandy with equal parts of water."

Another quarter of an hour went by; the physician felt the pulse frequently, and once or twice put his ear down to listen to the respiration. At length he went round to the other side of the bed, and laid his hand upon Sir Harry's arm, saying, "Now, my dear Sir, you had better retire to rest. A favourable change has certainly taken place;

and I will remain to watch her and administer the remedies myself, till noon, when I have an engagement."

"Is she safe?" asked the old man, fixing his eyes upon him.

"I hope and trust she is," said the doctor; "safety, however, is only God's giving. We will do our best under his will. Every symptom, however, shows a tendency to improvement; and with care I am very confident of the result."

"Then see me before you go," said Sir Harry; and he retired to give thanks and to take some repose.

"How is she now?" asked the old man, entering Kate's room, at a little after eleven.

"Sleeping as calmly as an infant," replied the physician; "the breathing, regular and calm; the pulse, slow and fuller — come and see. If we lose her now, it must be our own fault; but it has been the narrowest race between life and death I almost ever saw."

Life won it, however.

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE was a ship sailing over the dark sea. Slowly it passed on through the waves, for the wind from the north-west, though not absolutely contrary, favoured its progress but little. There were no stormy billows around it, though the large heavy swell of the Atlantic where it meets the waters of St. George's Channel, heaved it up and down as if it had been a feather on the bosom of the waters. Yet it was a goodly bark of many hundred tons burden, nearly new from the shipbuilder's hands, and laden with a precious freight of human life. She was not a royal vessel, but nevertheless armed and manned as a ship of war; and with every sail set to catch the light breeze, she ploughed her way onward towards the Far West.

The moon was still far below the horizon, for she rose very late, and there was a heavy mass of low cloud overhead: the feathery fringe of that dark veil, sometimes descending in mist, till it swept the sea beneath, and made the lamp over the compass glare like a hazy meteor. Yet if the heaven denied its stars, the ocean seemed to have its lights; for ever and anon, as the waves broke upon the vessel's sides, flashes of fire, as they seemed, would spangle the foamy tide, and suddenly disappear. But still all was black, and solemn, and silent around; and there was some-

thing strange, and dream-like, and unreal, in finding one's self borne thus stilly onward in the midst of that inscrutable darkness, over that wide and gloomy swell of waters. The rush and the ripple, and the faint whisper of the wind amidst the rigging, were the only sounds; and the sights were but the phosphorescent sparkle of the waves, the glare of the lamp, and a phantom-like form walking here and there upon the deck.

Many were the emotions of which that ship had been the scene within the last few hours. There were some voyagers setting out with joy to meet friends, and relatives, and love, long parted from; and some instinct with hope of brighter fortunes in a distant land; and some moved with yearnings for change; and some with high ambitions and aspirations for wealth, distinction, or renown. But, except the watch upon the deck, almost all had retired to the hammock or the close small berth, to dream that they were in the midst of happy meetings over the wide sea, or that they were still in their own homes, or that they were reaping glory, or winning wealth, or tasting some one or other of the sweet and bitter fruits of life.

A few, however, of the passengers still paced the deck, mostly keeping silence, as if in reverence of the solemn stillness round; and amongst the rest were two who had joined the vessel just on the eve of her sailing, who walked up and down with a steady step, as if not unaccustomed to the plank upon the sea. But if there was deep darkness in the air, there was a more oppressive night in the

heart of Reginald Lisle; for the star of hope had gone out for him, and when he set his foot upon the ship's deck, he felt as if he had bidden adieu to happiness for ever, — as if he went with all the ties of human affection broken, a lonely struggler with fate, to fight the fight with utter indifference to all things but his country's honour, perhaps to win, perhaps to lose, perhaps to live, perhaps to die; but without one personal feeling mingling in the motives.

Sometimes a few words passed between him and his companion, but still they both soon fell into thought again; sometimes Reginald would pause, and leaning over the bulwark, gaze down upon the turbulent waters rushing by, while his friend prolonged his steady course towards the stern, wrapped like himself in thought, but lighter far in the tone of his meditations; sometimes Brandrum would stop and speak to him, and then receiving a short reply, would walk on again.

"I wonder if the great Moose is living yet," said the old officer, pausing for a moment, in one of his walks.

"Dead, most likely," was the reply, and on he went.

"Scalped, in all probability," Brandrum rejoined, at his next turn.

"I dare say he is," said Reginald, and the colonel pursued his way.

"I wish I had been born an Indian," said the colonel, a minute or two after.

"You do quite as well without," replied Reginald Lisle; "it were better to wish one had never been born at all."

"Pooh, pooh! my dear boy," said his friend, stopping; "all comes right in the end."

"By death," said the young man.

"Halloo! — Steersman! — You fellow at the wheel!" shouted Brandrum, the next moment, in a voice that would have drowned a tempest, "What the devil is that upon our weather-bow?"

A mate who was upon watch caught a rope, and jumped upon one of the bulwarks; but at the same instant a bell was heard ringing, loud and sharp, at a little distance, and through the darkness of the misty night, sweeping down right upon them, appeared, dim and gigantic, like some enormous spectre, the bows and bowsprit of a large ship, towering high above the deck of the ill-fated *London*.

Loud cries, commands, shouts, oaths, were heard, and various things were done, or attempted, which would be tedious and useless to describe. In vain — it was all in vain, or only served to render the disaster more fatal!

Driving on, the monster of the deep, becoming each second more distinct, came forward against the weather side of the bark, which was now brought right athwart her. The bowsprit passed over the bulwarks — tore through shrouds and rigging — grazed the mainmast. Then came a violent concussion, which threw the stoutest men off their feet, accompanied by a loud crashing sound of breaking

timbers, and then, heeling to one side, the deck was covered with water.

The noise, the tumult, in both vessels, was beyond description. Ropes, buoys, hen-coops, were thrown from the man of war, as on she drove in her merciless course, crushing the merchant vessel down into the waves.

"Lisle — Lisle! are you safe?" cried the voice of Colonel Brandrum, as he was pulled up by a rope thrown from the larger vessel.

Lisle did not answer — he looked round — a feeling of despair was upon him. There were hundreds perishing to whom life was precious — why should he struggle, to whom existence was a burden? He saw a half-clothed figure running up from the cabin — it was the last thing he beheld distinctly — the water dashed over him — he was swept from his feet, and the next moment felt himself sucked down as if in the vortex of a whirlpool. The ill-fated *London* had gone to the bottom, with all its freight of hopes and fears, desires and aspirations.

The instinct of self-preservation, however, is most strong. For a few seconds the heavy waves rolled over Reginald Lisle's head; but then he rose, and instantly, without knowing or willing it, struck out with strength and skill. He was an expert and practised swimmer; and the impulse was not to be resisted. Ere he had swam half a dozen yards, and before he had fully recovered thought, his hand struck against something hard. It was a hen-coop, and he clutched it tight. It rolled round with his weight; but he held fast,

and soon found means to make it serviceable. Untying his cravat, he contrived to bind himself to it in such a manner as to keep his head and shoulders above water, without spending his strength in any farther exertion than was necessary to prevent the coop from being rolled over by the waves. But the sea, as I have said, was not rough, and such small objects as the man and the frail woodwork that supported him, were raised upon the bosom of the long swell, hardly feeling it.

Reginald had now time for thought; and better feelings had regained their influence. The remembrance of duties came back, the voice of faith and hope was heard in the midst of the waters. "If I perish, it shall be by God's will, not my own fault," he said. "Thank Heaven, Brandrum is safe! I saw him hauled up the ship's side."

His next thoughts turned to the chances of deliverance; and first he looked out for the vessel which had caused the disaster, thinking that she might probably bring-to (as indeed she did), in order to pick up any of the crew of the *London* who might be floating about. But the mist was still upon the sea, and the speed with which the *Russell* was going before a fair wind, could not be stopped for some minutes. Reginald could see nothing of her. He knew, however, by the small way the *London* had made through the water, and by the objects he had seen just before sunset, that he could not be far from the mouth of the Bristol Channel, and he trusted that some of the many vessels continually leaving or returning to the port, might come within

hail after daylight. Luckily the year was now so far advanced that night was not of long duration, and his sufferings were less than they might have been, had the accident occurred in the cold season of winter. In about an hour, or a little more, the mist cleared away, and the stars shone out, clear and bright, over head. In another hour they grew paler, and a faint grey light spread over the sky, showing Reginald where the east lay. That was something gained; but he now found that he was drifting to the south-west. At length the sun rose — oh, how calmly and beautifully! — and he could perceive to the eastward a low greyish line against the burning sky. It might be cloud, it might be land. He looked around to see if he had any companions in misfortune near. There was a barrel floating not far off another hen-coop, and several pieces of timber, heaving up and down upon the bosom of the swell, but no living thing. An oar, which had been swept out of one of the ship's boats, then drifted by, and he contrived to catch it, and fasten his handkerchief to the end of it as a sort of flag of distress. He raised it up; but he was exhausted and dispirited, the oar was heavy, and he was forced to let the end fall again, and support itself upon the water. About three-quarters of an hour passed by without his seeing anything more, except some sea birds rapidly skimming along, close to the waves, and then the swell heaved him up as on the ridge of a rounded hill.

“A ship! a ship!” and now with better hope he raised his signal as high as he could.

The ship sailed straight upon her course, coming nearer, it is true, for her path over the waters led her across that along which he was slowly borne, but at the distance of full half a mile. He could see no change whatever, and he did feel disappointment; but yet I must not ascribe to him feelings which he did not experience, in order to give deeper interest to my narrative. Reginald had not yet learned to value life so fully as to make the alternation of hope and fear very powerful. He watched the vessel, indeed, as he rose and fell upon the swell, with some degree of eagerness, but there are few men in his situation would have felt less.

Still there was a sensation of joy when he saw a sudden change of her course, and became convinced, from various indications, familiar to his eyes from having frequently voyaged far, that he was seen and she was bringing-to.

In five or ten minutes more he was on the deck of a brig of war; but the language spoken all around him was French. He was well accustomed to the tongue, however, and spoke it almost as well as a native; for during a long residence in Canada, it had been the tongue which he had principally been called upon to use. Everything that kindness and courtesy could do to comfort and restore him was done; for the French were at that period the most polished people upon earth. A fierce revolution had not yet swept away, with a dark mass of evils, the courtesies and amenities of life. Many were the questions asked him, indeed, and much was the talking round him; but, though his dress bespoke

him a British officer, and actual, though not yet declared, hostilities were taking place between France and England, yet he was treated with the utmost suavity and politeness. Dry clothes were found for him, food and wine were freely given, and the commander of the brig promised to put him on shore at the first French port, whence he could procure a passage for his own country. He was as good as his word, too; and after a sojourn of three very pleasant days on board the brig, Lisle was landed at Calais, and the next day, without any of those lets and hinderances which would occur in the present time to a person so circumstanced, he obtained a passage in a packet-boat to Dover.

A voyage across the Channel in those days, was not what it is now. Neither had steam-boats bridged the waves, nor had they egged on sailing vessels to go at tolerable speed out of pure emulation. Very often twelve mortal hours were consumed in going from the French to the English port, and sometimes nineteen, as the writer has known to his cost. On the present occasion the wind was fair but light, the day fine, the sea smooth; and Reginald Lisle — tell it not to the lovers of pure romance, or those who are fond of what is called in the present day “powerful writing” — Reginald Lisle did feel, and did acknowledge to himself, that it was much more comfortable to stand upon a dry, secure deck in the free sunshine, than to cling to a frail collection of planks and lathes immersed in the wild waters — even though his heart was still heavy, and his thoughts sad with a bitter disappointment of the brightest of all early hopes.

He was pacing the small space of deck, on which were but few of the few passengers; and perhaps he might think of Mary Chevenix — perhaps he might ask himself, if she had heard the rumour, which he doubted not had spread, of his death — perhaps he might long to know if she had shed a tear or two over his supposed fate, and had regretted what he could not but call the caprice she had displayed — when suddenly a man of gentlemanly appearance was seen coming up the companion ladder; and the next moment, Captain Donovan stood before him, gazing round with a look of indifference. His eye passed over Reginald; but for a moment, either from absence of mind or some other cause, he did not seem to recognise him. The next instant, however, he gazed fixedly at him, and exclaimed, with a start, "Good Heaven! Major Lisle! Do my eyes deceive me? Not two days have passed since I received this letter, telling me that you had been lost in the unfortunate *London*;" and he produced from his pocket a soiled and ill-folded epistle, addressed in a very cramp and vulgar hand.

"Such a report might well get abroad, Captain Donovan," replied Lisle, somewhat coldly; "for I was several hours in the water, supported by a hen-coop, and was at last picked up by a French vessel, in which I was obliged to remain for several days. May I ask who thought it worth while to give you intelligence of the assumed fate of so insignificant a person as myself?"

Donovan coloured a little, but replied, "It was Hargrave, a servant in attendance upon Sir Theodore Brough-

ton;" and seeing Reginald turn, as if to pursue his walk up and down the deck, Donovan, for some reason or another, walked on at his side.

It is difficult to escape from a fellow passenger on board a packet-boat, without palpable rudeness; and, although Lisle did not like the man, and would have been well content to be rid of his company, he was forced to endure it.

Donovan, for his part, mused for several minutes; and then, seeming to have settled the plan of his speech — for speeches, even in common conversation, have often plans, as the reader, learned in the heart may know — he said, somewhat abruptly, "Do you know, Major Lisle, there is more that may in some degree be interesting to you, in that letter, than the mere news of your own death."

"That is a subject in which I take very little interest," replied Lisle, with a faint smile. "What more, Captain Donovan?"

"I am here informed," replied the other, raising the letter, which he still held in his hand, "that it is one of the goodly schemes of my young and troublesome ward, Sir Theodore Broughton, to marry a young lady, named Miss Catherine Malcolm, in whom I believe you do feel a great interest."

"Decidedly," replied Reginald; "but I should strongly suspect, Captain Donovan, that it is not, by any means, one of her schemes to marry him. Make your mind easy upon that score. No such ill-assorted match is at all likely to mar your views for your ward. I do not believe, if he

had the wealth of the Indies, Miss Malcolm would condescend to marry Sir Theodore Broughton, after having been insulted by him as she has been."

"I am happy to hear you say so," replied Donovan, in an altered tone; "it may save me from some embarrassment, as I have business which calls me to another part of the country; and yet I should have thought it a duty to go immediately to London, to stop such rash proceedings. I may, I suppose, depend upon your view of the case."

"You may depend upon what I say being my view of the case," answered Lisle; "and more, my dear Sir, you may depend upon it that Colonel Brandrum — who must be now in London, as he was taken into the vessel which ran us down — will oppose such a union as you have mentioned, to the utmost of his power; for, however light and careless he may have seemed to you, he is one who values honour and integrity above all wealth or station. He has a right also to oppose, as he promised the young lady's father, on his deathbed, to be a parent to his orphan child."

"You are somewhat severe upon my young ward," said Captain Donovan; "but having these assurances, I shall not make myself uneasy;" and, indeed, during the rest of the journey he seemed greatly relieved. But Captain Donovan was not a man to trust to any guarantees but his own observation.

Before the boat reached the port of Dover, he had disappeared below the deck again; and Lisle certainly did not look for him, to bid him adieu. As the young officer was passing up to the hotel, however, something caused him to turn back his head, and he beheld his late travelling companion, with a pretty-looking French woman on his arm. He turned his head away instantly, and pursued his course.

Dover was one of those places which, at the time I speak of, possessed a stage coach travelling to and from London; and, as the money which was in Reginald's purse, when the ship went down, was not great in amount, he preferred the cheaper conveyance to the more comfortable and solitary one. The coach set out, on its return to the capital, about five o'clock, and, accomplishing the journey in eighteen hours, reached London at eleven on the following day. Nothing occurred on the road worthy of commemoration, unless it were, that, while changing horses at Dartford, a post-chaise passed the vehicle on its way to town, and Reginald, who had got out to relieve himself from his cramped position in the coach, saw clearly that, notwithstanding all he had said, Captain Donovan was on his way to the great city.

In London, Lisle's first visit was to the horse-guards; and there he was detained some time. His next was to his agents; not to transact business; for to relieve the anxieties of the dear who doubted, and to wipe away the tears of those who grieved, was his first care after duty.

But he knew that it must be done cautiously, and therefore he wished to engage Mr. —, in the first place, to go down and state to his mother and sister, that some of the passengers, in the *London*, had been picked up at sea. The tidings that now met his ears were a cold, cold welcome back to his native land; and, by the feelings which he experienced himself, he learned, in part at least, what would have been the grief of his poor mother, had she lived to hear the report of his death.

Sad and heavily he took his way to the inn, at which he had informed the secretary of the commander-in-chief he should take up his abode, and was somewhat surprised when the waiter, to whom he was known, said, "Very glad to see you safe, Sir. There is a letter for you in the bar."

"Some note, sent after I had set out," thought Reginald; and, taking it indifferently, he told the man to show him to a room. For a minute or two, he did not open it—it looked like an invitation to a dinner or a ball; but at length he broke the seal, and saw a few words, which seemed written to change the whole current of his feelings. They were as follows:—

"I am bold, perhaps, to write to you at all; but it is with my father's permission. I have asked him what I ought to say, and he tells me to say what I feel. I feel, then, that I have been wrong, but more deceived by circumstances than wrong; and I am ready to explain all, if you desire to hear, and to ask forgiveness, too, for

having given pain where I could least have wished it. Though your trust in me, Reginald, may be shaken, from what has passed, I have now learned that I ought not to have withdrawn my trust from you.

"But I am writing stiffly, coldly. Such are not my feelings, indeed; and I will only further say, if it will give you pleasure, come to us to-night — not till after eight o'clock, for I am setting out immediately to break to dear Louisa the tidings which we have somewhat abruptly, but yet kindly, received from Lord Granby, and to tell her that the tears we have shed together were causeless. I have still confidence enough in your generosity and your love, to say,

"Yours,

"MARY CHEVENIX."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A STATE sometimes succeeds to typhus fever, during which, for a few days, the convalescent is plunged in utter forgetfulness of all that went before, with the exception of some scattered facts, generally referable to the period of infancy. I knew a young man who, having been seized with the malady, at one of the universities, not long before the time appointed for his examination for academical honours, found, when sense and consciousness returned, that he had totally forgotten every word of Latin and Greek: and, in a still more extraordinary instance, a lady, born in India, and brought up till she was six years old by a Hindoo nurse, during an attack of fever when she was twenty-seven, forgot entirely the English language, and for several days could speak nothing but Hindostanee, of which she had previously forgotten the very sound. Truly, we are fearfully and wonderfully made!

Such was, happily, the case with poor Kate Malcolm. She remembered nothing during the first ten days after the disease had passed its crisis, of the events which had immediately preceded. She knew the persons around her, and spoke perfectly rationally of every subject brought before her; but not one particular fact regarding her own situation presented itself to her mind during that period.

In the mean time she recovered rapidly her bodily health and strength. The dim and painfully distressed eye recovered its light and lustre; the dry parched lip once more became red, and full, and soft; and a faint, rosy hue began to spread itself over the pale cheek. The warm summer air breathing in at the ever open windows, seemed to bring healing upon its wings: she was permitted to rise, to walk about the room, and to go into that adjoining. Sir Harry Jarvis was with her all day long; and the joy and affection in the old man's face, as well as his cheerful conversation, aided not a little the efforts of youth and a good constitution to cast off all the remains of illness. Sir Charles Chevenix came to see her too, several times; but he had wisely taken the instructions of the physician, and he followed them, by refraining from everything which could produce agitation, even of a joyful kind.

At length the poor girl was permitted to drive out with her uncle, and then to walk for an hour in the park; but to the surprise of Sir Harry, her spirits fell as her health rose; for memory, with all its pangs, returned; and dark, and hard, and clear to the eye of imagination, appeared her sad future fate; like the burning mountain of the Eastern tales, at which were performed the human sacrifices to the god of fire, rising before the eyes of the intended victims, as the annual ship bore them towards it. With clearer remembrance, came also the longing to know the fate of Lutwich. She did not, indeed, imagine that the day of his trial could yet be come; but she wished to inquire —

to learn what others judged of the probable result. She dared not ask, however; she feared even to pronounce his name; and though she often resolved to make some effort to obtain information, yet the powerful determination which, hand in hand with affectionate gentleness, had dwelt in her heart while in health, had been enfeebled by illness, and was not yet restored.

At length, one day, Mary, who had been to see her twice without ever mentioning any subject that could recall the past, led the way herself towards the topic uppermost in Kate's thoughts.

"I have a whole budget of news to give you, dear Kate," she said; "but I am ordered only to dole it out to you by degrees, and we have matter for several days' conversation. Louisa would have come to see you with me, but she has been very ill, poor girl. The false report of Reginald's death, added to the grief she suffered before, quite overpowered her.

"The false report," said Kate, speaking to herself, "thank God for that! — and Major Brandrum too, Mary, is he safe? They were in the same ship."

"He was one of the nine who were saved," replied Mary: "all but those who were on the deck perished; but poor Colonel Brandrum's thigh was broken by the falling of a spar, as the sailors call it, just as they were getting him into the *Russell*. He is doing well, however, but cannot move, or he would have been to see you long ago."

"I must go to see him," replied Kate, thoughtfully; "but now tell me, dear Mary, — between you and Captain Lisle — is all explained?"

"Yes, yes," replied her friend, with a blush and a smile, "all is explained, and he has quite forgiven me: but I will not talk of my own selfish happiness, Kate. I have other tidings for you, which I know will be joyful to you also, if you are strong enough to bear them."

"Oh, yes," replied Kate, "anything joyful will do me good, Mary, and give me strength for that which will be more difficult to bear."

"Well, then, Colonel Lutwich is acquitted," replied Mary, fixing her eyes eagerly on her young companion, in some doubt as to the effect of these tidings; but Kate only clasped her hands together, and with tearful eyes murmured, "Thank God! — thank God! — Then the sacrifice has not been unfruitful."

The next moment she looked up timidly, and asked, "Can you tell me, Mary, whether that man — that William Havant — appeared against him?"

"No, he did not," replied Mary Chevenix; and Kate's eyes fell again, and she sank into a profound reverie.

She seemed so calm, however, that Mary thought she might venture to go on. "Colonel Lutwich," she said, "gave my father this letter for you, Mary; but the doctors would not allow it to be delivered till to-day. Read it, dear Kate, if you like, I will sit here in the window till you have done."

Kate broke the seal and read. The letter was a long one, and it made the tears fall fast upon the paper; but still she was otherwise calm, and Mary did not interrupt her by a word.

When she had done, she sat for some moments with the letter on her knee, and then turning to her friend, she inquired, "Where is Lutwich now, Mary? I must write to him; for still it is clear he has either not received or not understood my last letter. Yet I gave it to your father for him, Mary. I did not indeed venture to write the facts exactly, for fear the people of the prison should take it, and then find means to force the attendance of that man at the trial; but yet I thought he would comprehend."

"What makes you think he did not, dear Kate?" asked Mary, approaching her, and sitting down by her side; "the letter was certainly delivered."

"He says here," rejoined Kate, "that through the generous kindness of the commander-in-chief, he is permitted to serve in America; that he will be absent for two years, and that during that time he will endeavour to prove that he is not unworthy of my love—"

Kate paused, for tears drowned her voice; but after a moment or two, she added, "Alas, dear Mary! he must have understood that, ere those two years are over, I must never even think of him with love—must think of him at all as little as possible."

"He heard from my father your situation in every respect, Kate," replied Mary, laying her hand upon that of

her fair companion; "but at the same time, I know he was told that your friends would never consent to your keeping a promise so obtained, and which every one must consider perfectly invalid."

"It is registered there, Mary," said Kate, pointing to the sky. "I dare not break it."

"But it was obtained by the most infamous means," urged Mary; "it was drawn from you by compulsion and by a base conspiracy."

"It was a compact, dear Mary:" replied Kate, in a low, quiet voice; "they have fulfilled their part — Lutwich is saved in consequence of it: I must not refuse to fulfil mine, when I called God to witness my pledge. I believe it was almost wrong to tell you anything about it; but still, Mary, I must be true, whatever I be — I dare not falsify my word."

Mary Chevenix was deeply grieved; but she was a poor casuist; and though she still urged several arguments against her poor friend's vow, they failed to convince. Kate was nearly silent, indeed; but it was evident that she was unshaken to the end of their conference.

During the whole of that afternoon, Sir Harry Jarvis was peculiarly grave and thoughtful; and on the following morning, he announced to Kate that he must go to London for some hours upon business. Kate saw him depart with a feeling almost of dread: she knew not why, indeed, but still she felt unwilling to be left alone. She passed part of the morning in reading, and part in writing, and then

wandered out into the park, walking on slowly under the shade of the old trees. It was an extensive piece of ground; and she had gone nearly half a mile, when she turned suddenly, seeing two strangers apparently watching her. Taking her way back towards the house, she hurried her pace, hearing footsteps behind her; but she went so rapidly, that she was within sight of the windows and the drive when those who were following overtook her. She was a good deal alarmed; but feeling that, if necessary, she could make her voice be heard, she paused to let the others pass, which they did, and then instantly turned. Kate, as they did so, saw before her a face which she could not easily forget, and with a shudder recognised Sir Theodore Broughton.

"Miss Malcolm," he said, biting his lip at the sight of feelings but too evident; "I have long been seeking an opportunity of speaking with you."

Kate hesitated for an instant, and then replied, "It would not have been denied you, Sir, if you had applied at the house of my grand-uncle, Sir Harry Jarvis."

"I am aware of your newly discovered relationship," replied the young man, sternly; "but that can make no difference in your promises to me, Miss Malcolm."

Kate was silent, and he went on, "Do you deny your promise? Here it is in your own handwriting. I have fulfilled my part, and I claim the fulfilment of yours."

"I do not deny it," said Kate, with a faltering tongue; and then giving a glance to Doctor Gamble, she added,

"I think I have been somewhat deceived, however. Did not that person come to me in disguise, representing himself as a lawyer?"

"That has nothing to do with the question," said Sir Theodore, sharply; "your promise was given upon certain conditions — you called God to witness you would fulfil it, if those conditions were accomplished. They are accomplished to the letter, and I require you to redeem your word."

"I beg you to let me pass, Sir," said Kate faintly, alarmed by his vehemence. "I am ill — I have been very ill — let me pass to the house — you can speak with me there. You shall not be denied, I promise you."

"I will have an answer first," replied Sir Theodore, vehemently; "you can say Yes or No here, to a plain question. Will you fulfil your word?"

"I will," said Kate, in a tone of despair; "but let me pass, I beg. There is some one coming, and I am not in a fit state —"

Sir Theodore and Doctor Gamble instantly turned their eyes in the direction in which Kate was looking, and both turned somewhat pale.

"Donovan, by —!" exclaimed the worthy tutor. "I'll be off; d — n it, she's fainted, upon my life!"

"Stay, Sir!" exclaimed Sir Theodore, in a voice of thunder. "I don't care if it be Donovan or the devil. Help me to carry her into the house."

Sir Theodore Broughton. II.

Doctor Gamble chose his part at once, and obeyed, although he would have given all he possessed to escape the eye of the guardian, rather than assist the ward; but by this time the dominance of the more vehement character was fully established over the more cunning. Raising Kate in their arms, they bore her towards the house, which they had nearly reached before Captain Donovan came up.

That gentleman uttered not a word, but followed them in silence, with a frown upon his brow, and a sort of sarcastic smile upon his lip. Neither did Sir Theodore show that he saw him, except by the firm shutting of the teeth together, with a look of determination which was not without its meaning. Determination with a strong and permanent motive, however, is a much more powerful thing than that founded upon a caprice or any transitory passion. And here let me remark, that all passions should be classified exactly like verbs — transitive, passive, and neuter, and the passive are the most dangerous and the most permanent.

They bore Kate Malcolm to the door of the house then; and Captain Donovan rang the bell; but still, though they were necessarily detained a moment there, no one spoke. Doctor Gamble, indeed, did not at all like the dead silence of his two companions; but it overawed him; and he did not venture to open his lips, notwithstanding a constitutional tendency to loquacity. At length the butler and another servant appeared, and all was bustle, anxiety, and consternation, at the sight of Miss Malcolm fainting. She

was carried at once into the library, however; and the footman was sent in haste for the housekeeper, as Sir Harry's return was expected every moment, and Dixon declared that he would not for the world have his master come back, and find his young lady so unwell.

His precautions were vain, however; the old lady had just entered the room, and was giving her directions, and applying her approved restoratives, when wheels were heard rolling up without.

The same dull silence had been maintained by the three gentlemen who had carried or accompanied Miss Malcolm into the house; and to the housekeeper's inquiry of where they had found her, and how it had happened, Sir Theodore had replied nothing. The next moment, however, Captain Donovan looked at him sternly, saying, "Now, Sir Theodore, I think you and I, and this gentleman, had better retire."

But neither his stern look nor his words had any effect upon the young baronet. Sir Theodore had got a step farther in his progress. He was resolved to resist; and he merely replied, "Not yet, Sir."

The next moment Sir Harry Jarvis and Sir Charles Chevenix entered the room, and, of course, were not a little alarmed and astonished at what they beheld. Their first care was, of course, directed to Kate, who was beginning to revive, and who in a few minutes was able to sit up. None of the party present when he came in, except Kate and his own servants, was known to Sir Harry Jarvis, and

when satisfied that his grand-niece was not seriously indisposed, he looked round with an inquiring glance.

Sir Charles Chevenix, however, who was slightly acquainted with one of the gentlemen, and thought he recollected the face of another, began the explanation, saying, "Captain Donovan, Sir Harry Jarvis. This, if I mistake not, is Sir Theodore Broughton."

"The same, Sir," said Sir Theodore, boldly.

"And this, Sir," said Captain Donovan, with a sarcastic smile, "is Doctor Gamble — as serviceable a knave as any in Europe."

"For which excellent reason," replied Gamble, now goaded to retaliate, "you selected him as the tutor of your ward."

"Gentlemen," said Sir Harry Jarvis, "these are harsh words. Kate, my dear, remain here — lie upon the sofa — do not rise yet. These gentlemen and I will go into another room;" and telling the housekeeper to remain with her, he opened the door with ceremonious courtesy, and requested the rest of the party to follow him.

As they were entering the dining-room, Sir Charles Chevenix whispered a word or two in the old baronet's ear, who replied, "That is clear — I understand it all."

"And now, gentlemen," said Sir Harry, "pray, be seated, for I have a few inquiries to make. I understand, from my butler, that Miss Malcolm, my niece, was brought in, fainting, by yourselves. Permit me to ask how this happened?"

"I know nothing of the circumstances, Sir," answered Captain Donovan; "but having heard some rumours of proceedings I did not approve of, I followed Sir Theodore and Doctor Gamble hither. When first I caught sight of them, they were talking to the young lady in the park; but before I came up she had fainted, and they were carrying her towards your mansion."

"I trust, young gentleman," said the master of the house, fixing his eyes sternly upon Sir Theodore, "that you gave no occasion for emotions calculated to produce such a result. I have heard, Sir, of some proceedings on former occasions, which lead me to suspect that you have yet to learn what is due from a gentleman and a man of honour to a lady."

Sir Theodore was evidently a good deal embarrassed; but after a moment's pause, he replied in a bold and decided tone, "Sir Harry Jarvis, I shall not go back to the past, whatever you may think fit to do. On the present occasion, I have only done what I have a right to do, and that, I trust not, in a discourteous manner. I came hither to see Miss Malcolm, and meeting her in your park, I reminded her of a promise made by her some time ago to give me her hand. I have that promise in writing, and have a right to require its fulfilment. I think my station and my fortune entitle me to aspire to her, and that my demanding the accomplishment of a solemn pledge to which she called God to witness cannot be considered either an insult or an injury."

"You do her and me much honour, Sir," replied Sir Harry, calmly; "first, I will remark in passing, that Miss Malcolm is not of age to contract such engagements without my consent, being her nearest relative and natural guardian; and next, Sir, I will request you to inform me what she replied to this application."

"Oh, she said several things I do not well recollect," answered Sir Theodore, with a confused manner; "yes, I do now remember," he continued, "she did not deny the promise, and then said that she would fulfil it."

"The devil she did!" exclaimed Sir Charles Chevenix; "and then I suppose she fainted to show how pleasant she thought you."

Sir Theodore Broughton turned as red as fire, and replied, "Pleasant or unpleasant, Sir, she expressed her willingness to fulfil her plighted word, and nobody has a right to prevent her."

"I beg your pardon, Theodore," said Captain Donovan, "I have that right, and shall exercise it. You are my ward, Sir, and although, on the representation of several persons, that I was keeping you too strictly, I have suffered you to go for a month or two with the bridle on your neck, to see if you were able to guide yourself, depend upon it my arm is strong enough to use that bridle, now that I find you are unfit for such liberty; and I tell you plainly that I will not consent to such a marriage."

"Such a marriage!" said Sir Harry Jarvis, turning towards him, "may I inquire, Sir, what you could object to

in a marriage with my niece's child, if I condescended to agree to her giving her hand to this young man? Methinks one of my family, and the heiress of my property, might find a somewhat higher match, if she chose, than Sir Theodore Broughton."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Harry Jarvis," replied Donovan, who had turned singularly pale; "I did not at all mean to utter a word that could be offensive to you or the young lady either. I merely wished to convey to my ward the information, that as long as my guardianship continues, he can contract such engagements with no one, and that I certainly shall not consent to his marriage till he is of age. Then he must do as he pleases."

"And then I will as certainly marry her as I stand here!" exclaimed Sir Theodore Broughton, calling down awful curses on his head, if he did not fulfil his word. "If she have not a mind to be considered for ever perjured and faithless, she will keep her engagement," he continued. "I shall preserve that written promise carefully, you may all depend upon it; and the very day I am of age, I will demand its fulfilment. That day is not so far off, Captain Donovan."

"I know it is not," replied Donovan, looking at him with a very strange expression; "till then, you will obey me, if you please."

"A word or two more, Sir Theodore," said the old baronet, "I shall also object to my niece marrying till she is of age. You will mark me, I neither give my approval,

nor indeed express any opinion in regard to this promise which you say she has made you; but between this time and the period I have mentioned, I will talk with her fully on the subject, and determine my own conduct by her replies."

"If you doubt that she gave me the promise, and called God to witness that she would fulfil it, ask her herself," exclaimed Sir Theodore; "and I must request you, Sir Harry Jarvis, in fairness to her and to me, to tell her at once that, as soon as I am of age, whatever impediments be now thrown in my way, I will demand its fulfilment."

"I will," said the old baronet.

"And pray add, on my part," said Captain Donovan, "that I shall oppose its fulfilment as long as I have any authority, and that I protest against any idle words of this young gentleman being considered as an engagement."

"I will," replied Sir Harry again, in a dry tone; and rising from his chair, he stood with his hands behind his back, as if to intimate that the conference was finished.

The three gentlemen who, uninvited, had found their way into the old baronet's house, seemed to hesitate for an instant in regard to taking the hint; and in fact two at least of the party were unwilling to walk out, either individually or collectively, with the third. Captain Donovan, however, was the most cool, and after a momentary pause, he said, "Now, Sir Theodore, I think we may as well depart." The young baronet turned from him, bowed to Sir

Harry Jarvis, and walked to the door; Sir Harry rang the bell, and all three were ushered forth.

"You surely do not mean, Jarvis," said Sir Charles Chevenix, "to let that dear, excellent girl fulfil so rash a promise, and one so scandalously obtained, to a man whose whole conduct and demeanour proves that he is unworthy of her."

"My dear Charles," replied his old friend, "I shall certainly oppose her so doing by every argument I can use, when the time comes for him to demand the fulfilment of her word; but, at the same time, I will not control her. There are some people who would be rendered more unhappy by being forced to commit what they consider a wrong action, than by any personal suffering they could endure, and I believe my dear Kate is one of them. Then, on the other hand, as I told you the day before yesterday, this unfortunate attachment which has arisen between her and Lutwich, is one of the most painful things to me that ever could have occurred."

"I would a thousand-fold rather see her marry Lutwich than that young scoundrel," exclaimed Sir Charles warmly; "independent of his unprincipled conduct, his sullen, dogged character would make an angel miserable, while Lutwich, with all his faults, is a gallant, bold, open-hearted man, who never did a mean thing, though he may have done criminal things. I would rather give her to him a great deal than the other."

"So would I," said his friend, "but I would rather give her to neither; and I think that, by leaving her to suppose,

for a time at least, that she is really bound to this Sir Theodore Broughton, I may wean her heart of its attachment to the other."

Sir Charles shook his head; and the old baronet proceeded, "Not that I dislike, or ever did dislike, Lutwich. Far from it. I conceived a very great regard for him, Chevenix; but still, from the inquiries we have both made, there is very little doubt that he has not been suspected or accused wrongfully."

"Granted! — granted!" replied Sir Charles Chevenix, "his is a Cumberland family; and he has got a touch of the old blood about him. Carry him two or three centuries back, and put a spear in his hand, and you have a border knight. He is not a bit worse than his ancestors, I am sure."

"The two or three centuries makes all the difference," replied Sir Harry Jarvis.

"There is one thing to be said, however, which you have not considered, my good friend," rejoined his friend, "and that is, that if it had not been for Lutwich, you would never have had your pretty Kate, to give or to refuse to any one; for he ferreted out all the facts; and had it not been for his generous protection of her from the infamous pursuit of this very young man, who now seeks to marry her, the charge would never have been brought against him which has near cost him his life, and made him so distasteful to you. In considering his claims, you should never forget these two."

"Nor will I," replied Sir Harry, "but I much doubt, Chevenix, that Kate will ever be brought to violate her word, however rashly engaged, however shamefully wrung from her."

"So thinks Mary," said Sir Charles; "but time and proper representations, together with the soft pleadings of love for another, would, I am sure, make her view the case differently."

"I do not think it," replied Sir Harry; "but now let us go and see her."

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR THEODORE BROUGHTON, Captain Donovan, and Doctor Gamble walked along the road which led through Jarworth Park from the house to the lodge. The scenery was very beautiful, as some of the park scenery in green Hertfordshire is. The trees were old and fine, and so disposed along the road as to give every moment a new prospect, breaking in through some dell, or over some savannah narrowing towards its close; and the light of the afternoon sun, now somewhat more than half-way in its descent from the meridian, cast long, blue shadows over the turf, and purpled the lines of distant country, seen above the tree-tops in the lower parts of the park.

Not one of the three men saw that they were surrounded by beautiful landscapes. It is one of the sad qualities of evil passions in the heart to shut out from man's faculties the impression of all those bright things, in which a God of mercy created him to delight. Captain Donovan, calm, cold, and stern, was busy with thoughts dark and terrible enough. Sir Theodore, with many an angry feeling in his breast, was trying to nerve his mind to resistance, but with that combination of wilfulness and weakness which I have tried to depict, felt his courage unequal to his will, and his firmness giving way before the gloomy quietness of his

guardian's demeanour. Doctor Gamble was preparing replies, and, with that sort of impudent indifference which formed part of his high philosophy, was making up his mind to what could not be avoided, and resolving to have his revenge in repartee for any blame that might fall upon him. He saw, too, that Sir Theodore was dispirited, and perhaps to relieve him a little, or perhaps merely to vent an overflow of impertinence, he said, when they had gone some five or six hundred yards in silence, "A very pretty place this, captain, and a capital house. A good cook too, I dare say. There was a mighty savory smell. I think the old gentleman might have asked us to dinner."

"Be silent, Sir," replied Captain Donovan, without turning his head; "he does wisely to ask neither fools nor blackguards to his table."

Doctor Gamble was silenced for the time; and they walked on to the lodge without another word.

There was a carriage standing near the gates, and, when the driver saw Captain Donovan, he touched his hat and opened the door. "Be so good as to get in, Sir Theodore," said Captain Donovan.

"My own chaise is —"

"Gone back to Barnet," added his guardian suddenly; "I discharged it."

Sir Theodore got in, Donovan followed, and Doctor Gamble paused for a moment, as if not quite sure whether to enter or not.

"Come in, Sir," said the stern voice of the officer, "we shall want you;" and the tutor mounted the steps also. The driver shut the door, and, at a nod from Donovan, drove on without farther directions.

The determination shown in all these preparations, the coolness with which all his purposes and plans had been pre-arranged, and the still, dull silence which he maintained, overpowered for the time the last efforts of the spirit of resistance in his ward's heart. The carriage rolled on during that long twelve miles, without a single word being spoken, and stopped at length at the hotel where Sir Theodore and his tutor had resided in London. At the top of the stairs, near the door of the young baronet's sitting-room, they found Zachary Hargrave and the other servant, both equipped for a journey.

"Are all the things packed up, Hargrave?" asked Captain Donovan.

"All but Doctor Gamble's, Sir," answered the man with a grin; "I did not like to meddle with them."

"Quite right," said Captain Donovan; "order the horses and let me have the bill;" and, walking into the sitting-room, he said, "Sir Theodore, I intend that you should go with me into Warwickshire. If you have any preparations to make, you had better perhaps do so, as we set out in a quarter of an hour."

The young man glared at him, but after a momentary struggle with himself, made no reply and left the room.

"And now, Doctor Gamble," continued Donovan, "a few words, and only a few words, with you."

"Quite at your service, captain," replied the tutor in the easiest possible tone.

"Well, then, Sir, you must be quite aware that after what has happened," said Donovan, "you can be permitted to remain no longer with Sir Theodore Broughton."

"For obeying your directions, I suppose, Sir," answered Gamble, with a sarcastic smile; "you told me to let him see a little of life, and I *have* let him see a little."

"A little too much, Sir," replied Captain Donovan; "but whatever I said on that score, I did not tell you that I wished a boy not twenty to marry. Now, Sir, can you deny that you proposed and devised this marriage?"

"A sham marriage — a sham marriage, captain," replied Gamble, with the most perfect assurance; "nothing more did I ever propose or devise either; and that would have suited you, and him, and me quite well, I think. When he found that she was under such care and guardianship, that a sham marriage was not to be done, it was he himself determined upon a real one, against all my arguments and persuasions. I went down to Barnet with him three or four days ago, quite as if I were going to put my neck into a halter instead of himself. But what is your objection to the young lady? She will be immensely rich, is of very good family; and I will answer for it all the world will say it was a very suitable match, and if they

lay the arrangement of it at my door, will give me credit for more *savoir faire* than is my due."

There were two or three little touches in the tutor's speech which Captain Donovan did not like. He felt a sort of indefinite dread of his tool; but, at the same time, he was fully resolved that he should be separated from his young ward, and he replied in an indifferent tone, "All that may be very true, Doctor Gamble; and the world may praise you and blame me if it pleases. You should be aware by this time, I think, that I am very indifferent as to other people's opinions of my conduct. One thing, however, nobody can deny, that it was your duty not to have countenanced such a transaction without communicating with me, and receiving my sanction. Therefore your superintendence of Sir Theodore is at an end. There is a somewhat long account to settle between us, as I furnished you with a large sum of money. You will be good enough to render a statement of its disbursement to my lawyers, where you have had business before now."

"I will trouble you, on my part, for my half-year's salary, captain," said the tutor, unblushingly; "and I will put down the items of account with my usual punctuality. As to the large sum of money you mention, it is all gone, with the exception of seven pounds three and sixpence. I have vouchers for all my disbursements. It has not gone in *fumus*; but, as the base and perpendicular of a triangle are always more in sum than the hypotenuse, so do two

persons expend more than one person, especially in *seeing a little of life*, as you aptly and expressively termed it."

Captain Donovan gazed at him with a strong inclination to knock him down, but feeling that to do so might be dangerous, he merely replied: "You have let him see too much of money as well as life, I am afraid, Sir. However, give me pen and ink, and you shall have a draft for the sum you claim. The account of your expenses must be given in, as I have said; for I shall have to account hereafter. But pray remember that the investigation of the account may be strict, or otherwise, according to circumstances."

The pen and ink were given, the draft drawn, and a significant look interchanged between Captain Donovan and the tutor, before Sir Theodore Broughton returned. There were then some bills to be paid, and a few other affairs to be settled, and, at length, with a ceremonious air, Donovan begged his ward to proceed to the carriage.

Sir Theodore felt bitterly what it is to act under compulsion, and perhaps resolved to take his revenge some day; but, in the mean time, his detestation of his guardian revived a feeling, if not of regard, at least of companionship towards his tutor; and going up to him, he shook hands with him, saying, in a low voice, "Write to me, doctor. — I suppose I am not a state prisoner, and may read my own letters. Look after Kate, and let me hear all about her — especially if there be any talk of her marriage. At present, perhaps, I had better submit; but it

wants but a slight motive more to make me break my bonds. Where shall I write to you?"

"Good faith! my dear Theodore, that is a difficult question," replied Gamble; "I am like Milton's Adam, 'The world is all before me where to choose.' Well, address Post-office, Charing-cross. That is as good as any other. — I trust, Captain Donovan, that in seeking for a new appointment, I shall not want your recommendation?"

"On any application, I will not fail to do justice to your merits," replied Donovan, with one of his faint sarcastic smiles. "Good-morning, Doctor Gamble;" and he descended with his pupil to the carriage.

No delay was made upon the road. Donovan travelled all night; and the next day Sir Theodore Broughton found himself at his old ancestral hall. How dull and gloomy everything looked! How different from that which it appeared before! Very few words had passed between him and his guardian on the journey; and the young gentleman fancied that the same cold, sullen, demeanour was to last; that Donovan, displeased with all that had occurred in London, was resolved to resume the somewhat tyrannical sort of sway which had been exercised over him before. But he was mistaken. The dinner was served at the usual hour; the wine circulated in moderation; conversation, broken but not altogether grave, succeeded; and at length, after filling his own glass and pushing over the decanter to his ward, Captain Donovan said, "Now, Sir Theodore, to prevent all misunderstanding, I think it better to state

at once, the manner in which I expect that we are to live during the time that you continue under my guardianship. As you may see, I am not satisfied with what has taken place in London, and I am consequently resolved that you shall stay here under my own eye till you are of age. You have injured your health, done no good to your reputation, and may in some degree have corrupted your mind; but, I trust, not much. These results I in some degree anticipated; but foolish and impertinent people thought fit to comment upon my conduct in keeping you in the country, and not being willing to adhere obstinately to my own opinions, I permitted you to make a trial, which has ended as I expected. I do not pretend, however, to treat you as a boy, after you have been acting as a man; and I shall neither watch your actions in small things, nor attempt to restrain them therein. I shall only interfere in matters of real importance; but then I expect my authority to be respected. You are fond of shooting, hunting, fishing. The seasons for those amusements rapidly succeed each other, and I have no wish to prevent your enlivening to the utmost the dulness of a country life. Roam where you will within twenty or thirty miles of the house; bring what guests home you may think fit; and endeavour to enjoy yourself and recover your health, by prudence and moderation. I neither wish to act the part of a tyrant, nor even to let the necessary authority which I must exercise be visible to the eyes of others in a manner painful to yourself. The task, however, of preventing it from ever

becoming so, rests principally with you. I will take care to interfere as little as possible; but when I do — even by a very slight hint — be assured that it is upon full consideration, and with a determination not to be changed. Then, yield with a good grace, and no one will ever see that I interfere at all. Even that restraint will soon be over; and it is as well that the intervening time should pass pleasantly to us both.”

This was much better than Sir Theodore Broughton had expected; and he soon began to try the extent of his liberty. To the sports of the country, in which he had always indulged with excess, he added many of the vices and evil habits which he had acquired in London, and that in a manner, which could not fail to reach his guardian's ears. Captain Donovan took no notice. Sir Theodore would be absent from home all night, — it called for neither inquiry nor remark. He brought home loose and riotous companions, — Captain Donovan expressed no dissatisfaction, but retired from table at his own hour, and left the rest of the party to follow their course.

Indeed, the habits of that gentleman seemed a good deal changed. He was often, it is true, absent from the house for several days, but when he was there, he showed himself studious, thoughtful, frequently locked up in his own room for many hours, reading curious old books, and making various chemical experiments. Thus passed nearly a year, and summer had returned again, when the events took place which shall be recorded in the following chapter, premising

merely, that Donovan had been absent during a whole week, and that during three days of that time Sir Theodore had also been unseen in his own house, though he had neither servants nor baggage with him. When he returned, he looked ill and harassed, and sent for the apothecary from the neighbouring town. Some medicine was brought for him the same evening; but he did not take it; and, after inquiring if anything had been seen or heard of Captain Donovan, he drank somewhat more wine than was perhaps wise, and retired to bed.

CHAPTER XX.

IN a small room, hot to suffocation, although the windows were all open, was seated Captain Donovan, with an elderly man, curiously dressed, considering that it was the middle of the day; for he had on an old, worn, and very dirty dressing-gown, with his unpowdered grey hair tied with a greasy black ribbon behind, slippers on his feet, and the grey stockings which covered his legs slipping down in large wrinkles from under the unbuttoned knees of his drab breeches. His eyes were keen and sharp; but there was a somewhat wild look of abstraction in their glance which was hardly sane. The room contained little furniture beyond book-shelves, furnaces, stills, retorts, and crucibles; and while Donovan pored over the pages of an old book, the other, who seemed the master of the house, busied himself with what was going on in three of the small furnaces.

"You 'll kill yourself, Amos, if you go on this way," said Donovan, looking up. "I cannot think what a man of your competent fortune can want, stewing yourself to death in this way, unless it be to arrive at the happy consummation of putting yourself out of the world."

"No, no," answered the other, with a laugh; "if I desired to do that, I would use the laurel water we were

talking of some time ago. It is the speediest, quietest, most comfortable sort of death in the world; and then people would not have an opportunity of thrusting a stake through me either; for it leaves no marks. Have you found what you want? If you do not find it under the essences, look for the word, rosemary, in the index. Perhaps people may call it rosemary water; then you will come upon it just after the laurel water. I 'll get it for you."

"I've got it, I've got it," said Donovan, turning over some pages hastily. "I wish you would lend me this book, Amos."

"To be sure," replied the other; "though you 're but a dabbler in science, Donovan. Put it in your pocket; but send it back, mind;" and he applied himself to his furnaces again.

"Well, I must go," said Captain Donovan: "I cannot stay in this infernal hot place any longer."

The other laughed, and they parted.

Donovan proceeded to the inn of the little town where this scene took place, mounted his horse, and rode away. He went very quick; but he did not use any great caution in riding, for his mind seemed very busy with some strong preoccupying thoughts; and his horse twice stumbled, and nearly fell. Two or three times, too, as he rode along, he murmured, "In two months; ay, in two months."

He thus journeyed on for more than five and twenty miles, and at length reached the house of Sir Theodore Broughton, about three o'clock in the afternoon. After

giving his horse to a servant, he inquired if the young baronet was at home.

"He is out just now, Sir," replied the man; "but he came home yesterday, looking very ill we all thought."

"Indeed!" said Donovan; "not seriously ill, I hope."

"Oh, no, Sir; he is looking better to-day," replied the man, "but desperate cross."

"Let me have a fire lighted in my little room," said Donovan; and thither he retired. There were two letters lying on the table, and Captain Donovan took one up, read it with an indifferent air, and threw it down. The other, though much shorter, seemed of more importance; for it made his eye gaze eagerly, and his lip quiver. The few words it contained were to the following effect: —

"Sir Harry Jarvis presents his compliments to Captain Donovan, and begs to inform him that Sir Theodore Broughton has been again at Jarworth Park to renew his application for the hand of Miss Malcolm. Sir Harry Jarvis is very desirous of having an interview with Captain Donovan upon this subject, as Sir Theodore now states that he is within two months of being of age; and Miss Malcolm, notwithstanding every argument of her friends, and her own strong disinclination to the alliance, seems to feel herself bound by the promise she so rashly made. Sir Harry Jarvis would propose to wait upon Captain Donovan, but the state of his health does not permit him to travel."

Donovan held the paper in his hand motionless for a moment or two, and then walked once or twice up and down the room.

"He will have it," he said, at length; "he will have it;" and tearing the letter to pieces, he threw it under the grate.

A woman-servant entered to light the fire, saying, "I have not kept it in, Sir, while you were gone, for it has been so hot."

"The room feels chilly to me," replied Donovan; "you had better light it. I will go and walk up and down in the sunshine till it is done. I have somewhat overheated myself with hard riding;" and he went out.

Instead of going into the sunshine, however, he betook himself to the shadiest part of the gardens, and walked slowly up and down a walk bordered with shrubs of the cherry-laurel. From time to time, he picked a leaf and put it in his pocket, looked carefully around, and resumed his walk. At length he turned back to the house again, and re-entering the little room, which he had appropriated to the purposes of a study, locked the door behind him. He then took down from a shelf by the side of the fire a little portable still, put the laurel leaves into it, added some water, and placed it securely over the flame. When this was completed, a fit of indescribable agitation seized him. He trembled violently, sat down in a chair, placed his hands before his eyes, opened his waistcoat, as if for air. After a time he became somewhat calmer. "No need

of using it when it is made," he said; "there can be no harm in making it;" and, rising, he went out, locking the door behind him, and leaving the still over the fire.

As he was crossing the great hall towards the drawing-room, Sir Theodore came in; and going up to him at once, Donovan shook hands with him, saying, "The servants tell me you have not been well; and you do not look it at all. Really, my dear Theodore, you must take care, or you will seriously injure a constitution naturally strong."

"Pooh, pooh!" said the young baronet; "I shall soon be better."

"Have you taken the medicine the doctor sent?" asked Captain Donovan.

"No; I could not get it down, it was so nauseous," replied the young man; "but he has sent me something better to-day; and I will take it to-morrow."

"Upon your word?" asked Donovan, with a smile.

"Upon my word, I will," answered Sir Theodore, laughing. "My stomach is out of order, that is all; but I will take it. Indeed, I have put it on my dressing-room mantel-piece on purpose."

But little more passed at that time. Sir Theodore went his own way; and Captain Donovan returned to his room; but there the agitation he had before suffered seemed to seize him again. Once he took the still off the fire; and then he put it back again; and then walked up and down for nearly half an hour. At length he examined the re-

ceiver, into which somewhat more than a wine-glassful of liquid had come over.

"Where shall I put it?" he asked himself. "I wish I had a vial."

Then, after pouring the liquid into a tumbler, he quietly walked out of the room, looked into the library, where Sir Theodore was lying on a sofa apparently asleep, and mounted the stairs. When Captain Donovan returned to his study with the same noiseless step, he found the door ajar, and Zachary Hargrave standing by the table with the tumbler in his hand.

Donovan snatched it from him instantly, exclaiming, vehemently, "You have not been drinking that? It might — good Heaven! it might —"

"No, no, Sir," replied the man; "I have not drank any. I thought it was dirty water, and was going to carry it away."

"Never touch anything in my room," said Donovan, gravely; "you do not know what might be the consequences. What do you want?"

"Why, I wanted to speak with you about Sir Theodore, Sir," replied Hargrave.

Donovan pointed to the door. The man shut it and proceeded to say, "He was dreadful angry with me this morning, Sir, though, Heaven be praised! he had no cause. I have only humbly endeavoured to open his mind to grace in regard to little —"

"Well, well, never mind what you have done," cried Donovan, impatiently; "tell me what he said to you."

"Why, Sir, he said all manner of things," replied the man: "he abused me for a full hour, accused me of betraying him to you, and told me that, as soon as he was of age, he would not only kick me out of the house, but punish me for all those little fallings off, into which the weakness of the flesh betrays every man."

"Upon my life; he is likely to do it, too," answered Donovan. "Had I the means, Hargrave, I would protect you as long as I lived; and I will do what I can for you, whatever happens: for what Sir Theodore imputes to you as a fault to him, was no more than a duty. When did he say all this?"

"Why, a few hours ago, Sir, when I took the medicine up to his dressing-room," replied the man.

"Well, leave me now, Hargrave," answered Donovan; "it is near dinner-time. I will think what I can do for you. If I were master here, you should have a different prospect."

The man withdrew; but, for some reason or another, he remained close to the door, with his head bent down, and his eye very near the key-hole.

Shortly after, Captain Donovan joined Sir Theodore Broughton, and at dinner appeared calm and sedate, as usual. Again the young man drank a great deal of wine, and his spirits rose with the stimulus. His guardian re-

monstrated, in no very domineering tone, saying, that he had better abstain, for a few days at least, till he was in better health; but the servants were in the room, and Sir Theodore, already bold on his approaching emancipation, answered sharply, "I shall drink as much as I think proper, Sir."

"Very well — kill yourself, if you like," said Donovan, and shortly after dinner left him, and went to walk in the garden. He was no longer agitated, but a dull and sombre gloom seemed to hang over him. His eyes were bent upon the ground, his hands clasped together behind his back, and from time to time his lips moved, as if he were internally discussing some dark question. "Either he or I," he said; and then walked on again. Then paused and murmured, "If I could get rid of that bond — Ay, but how can that be done?" and again he resumed his perambulations.

It was nearly dark when he returned to the house, and his first question was in regard to Sir Theodore.

"He is out with the coachman and Brompton, Sir, fishing," replied the footman, who was in the hall.

"What, at this time of the evening!" exclaimed Donovan; and then added, after a pause, "He will kill himself, that is clear. He is greatly changed. His death would not surprise me any day."

He then went into the drawing-room and ordered coffee, and there he sat till the young baronet's return, which did

not take place till past nine. The servants heard some high words passing between guardian and ward; and shortly after Sir Theodore went to his bed-room, and ringing, ordered a tumbler of mulled wine to be brought him. He was evidently not in the most placable humour; and when Hargrave took him up what he had demanded, he asked him, why the devil he ever came into his sight?

"Did I not tell you this morning," exclaimed the young gentleman, "that you are a spy and an informer, a liar, and I dare say a thief into the bargain. Get out of the room this instant."

The man looked at him doggedly, and walked away muttering.

"No insolence, Sir, or I will kick you down the stairs!" exclaimed Sir Theodore, vehemently; and then, as Hargrave left the room, he added to himself, "By Heaven! when I am of age, I will teach these scoundrels a different story."

Captain Donovan remained in the drawing-room for more than an hour after his ward had left it, walking up and down incessantly. He then went to the door of his study; but he seemed to fear that room, and turning back upon his steps, seated himself before a window not yet closed, and gazed out towards the starry sky. They have voices those bright stars, and speak to the human heart, if we will but seek counsel of them — voices more sweet, more powerful, more true, than those which astrologers of old

ascribed to them. The power and presence of divinity is spoken by them, if not to crush, to overawe man's passions; and deaf must be the ear that will not hear.

Donovan gazed, and whatever was in his thoughts, the fit of agitation seized him again. "What am I to do?" he murmured, as he stood in the midst of that large old room—"what am I to do?" and then he walked up and down with his hand playing nervously with the seals of his watch. At length he stopped suddenly and said, "No, no, no!" and turning sharply away, he lighted a candle, and walked straight to the little room, where he had passed so much of the afternoon.

When there, he took down a vial from the shelf, which had not been there when Hargrave left him alone in the room. The tumbler on the table was empty; and the liquid it had contained was now in the vial. He held it up to the light, uncorked and smelt it, and then replaced it on the shelf. Then emptying the still of the laurel leaves, he cast them upon the fire, and watched them till they were consumed. He next, from a basket in the corner of the room, half filled the still with quick lime. That done, he turned to the door—paused—looked at the vial; and then murmuring once more, "No, no!" hurried away, and went to bed.

The house became silent and still in about half an hour; but at the end of a quarter more, the door of the little study opened, and a figure entered, bearing a candle. It

was not that of Donovan. With a still, quiet step, moving on his stocking soles, it was Hargrave who entered.

"Ay," he said, "the bottle is there! He hasn't done it. He 'd like, I 'm sure; but he 's afraid. I wonder if the stuff he poured in, is poison, after all. I'll soon see;" and taking the bottle down, he carried it to the kitchen. There was a large fire in the grate, before which, stretched at her ease, lay a large cat, which rose as the man came near, and rubbed herself against his legs. After looking about in various places, he found a jug with some milk in it; and pouring a portion into a saucer, he added about a tea-spoonful of the liquid from the bottle, and set the mixture down before the cat. She began to lap it eagerly; but stopped.

"Ay, it 's poison, sure enough," said Hargrave to himself; "they say cats won't take poison, though dogs will, sure enough."

The next moment, however, the animal returned to her drink, and had lapped up nearly the whole, when suddenly she drew back, staggered once or twice, as if she were drunk, and then the hind-quarters dropped apparently paralyzed. An instant after she fell over upon her side, and after two or three convulsive movements expired.

"Ay, pussy, you 've had enough, I think," said the man, with a grin; "and hang me if he sha'n't have the rest. Stay, I must wash out the saucer first;" and he applied himself to put everything in the same order as that in which he had found it.

He then walked quietly up stairs. At the top of the second flight, the first door was that of Sir Theodore Broughton's dressing-room, and it stood ajar. "That is a piece of luck!" said the scoundrel to himself.

Nevertheless, as he pushed it open, it creaked upon its hinges; and he started, prepared to run down stairs. All was silent, however; and after waiting a moment or two to listen, he entered the room. Treading on tip-toe, he moved across to the fire-place, where stood the bottle of medicine which had been sent that day for Sir Theodore Broughton. The man was cautious, however, and he examined the bottle well. It was labelled in the same manner as that which he held in his hand — "The draught for Sir Theodore Broughton. To be taken before breakfast." But the colour was very different; and drawing out the cork, he poured some of the medicine into the other bottle, till he had filled it up. Then substituting the one for the other, he was going away, but remembering that there had been two bottles there in the morning, he rubbed his head, and approaching a drawer in the dressing-table, he drew it out, saying to himself, "He used to have a number here."

What he sought was easily found; and placing another vial by the side of the first, he crept quietly out of the room again. His next voyage was to the kitchen once more, where he emptied and washed the bottle he had taken away, filled it with clear water, and placed it in Captain Donovan's study.

"Now," said Zachary Hargrave, as he threaded the manifold windings in the old house, back to his garret, "nobody can say I've poisoned him. If he takes it, it is his doing, not mine; and we're quit of him — the nasty young vermin!"

With such comfortable reflections, he lay down and slept quite quietly. Nor let the reader marvel; for none of us ever commit a wrong act without seeking, if not finding, some such evasion of the charge of conscience.

On the following morning, Captain Donovan was down early, and ordered his horse, saying, he should ride out for an hour before breakfast. A minute or two after, he heard Sir Theodore's bell ring; and he asked one of the servants if he had seen the young baronet.

"Not yet, Sir," replied the man. "I hope he will be better this morning."

"I do not think he is well at all," replied Captain Donovan. "Do you remark how his colour is changed? It would not surprise me at all if he did not recover."

In the mean while, the under-footman had gone up the stairs to the young baronet's room; and Captain Donovan walked leisurely towards the stable-yard to mount there. He had got one foot in the stirrup, when the man, who had gone out, came running up, exclaiming, "For Heaven's sake, stop, Sir! Sir Theodore is very ill!"

"What is the matter?" demanded Donovan, pausing instantly. "What ails him?"

"I don't know, Sir," replied the man: "he's all gasping and heaving, and foaming at the mouth."

"An epileptic fit, I suppose," said Captain Donovan, turning towards the house. "You, Thomas, mount the horse, and gallop off for the doctor;" and, without further pause, he returned and ran up stairs.

There were two women-servants in the young baronet's room, called by the footman in his first alarm; and they exclaimed as Donovan entered, "Oh, Sir! the stuff Thomas gave him out of the bottle has killed him."

Donovan ran hastily to the side of the bed; but there was now nothing but a corpse before him. The eyelids moved a little, and there was a convulsive movement of the chest; but the spirit had departed.

"Let me see the bottle," cried Donovan, and taking it from the maid's hand, he instantly recognised the smell of laurel water. A cold, chilly, deathlike feeling seized him. All his calmness and firmness forsook him in a moment. How could it have been given to him? Who could have given it? — Could he himself have done it in his sleep? A thousand such mad questions suggested themselves to his mind in a moment. Conscious of what he had meditated, terror took possession of him entirely. All presence of mind was lost, he snatched both bottles from the maid who had taken them up again, hurried with them to the basin, tasted the contents of one, and washed them both out with his own hands. Then running down to his study

without giving any directions to the women, he locked the door, and took down the vial from the spot where it stood. At first, his face looked joyful, as he gazed at it; but the next instant, he opened it and tasted the contents. It was pure water, and setting it down, he clasped his hands with a look of bewildered despair.

CHAPTER XXI.

THERE was sunshine of many kinds at Jarworth Park; for the bright beams of summer which poured in at the windows of the cheerful drawing-room, were not more warm or gay than the hearts of most of those assembled there. It is true, there were some clouds in the heaven, and also some cares in the bosoms of two or three, much darker than the soft vapours which passed upon the breeze; but those who had cause for sadness tried to throw it off for the time, in order to grace the welcome of dear friends, who came on a joyful journey with nothing but smiles.

Mary Chevenix and Reginald Lisle — whose paternal uncle had died on the day after his mother's death, leaving him both wealth and rank — had passed a short time in London after their marriage, and now came down to the house of the kind-hearted Sir Harry Jarvis, in order to meet Mary's father and mother. The good old baronet, ever thoughtful of what would give pleasure to others, had sent his carriage to London for Colonel Brandrum. Louisa Lisle came with her brother and her sister-in-law; and thus a large party, each worthy and amiable in their several ways, was assembled under one roof.

Sir Harry Jarvis himself, though now somewhat feeble, was all smiles and gladness, and as active as his infirmities

would permit in caring for the comfort of his guests. Kate was for the time, not merely externally cheerful; for she was one who knew not seeming. The effort went deeper than the lips or the brow, and she forced her heart to throw away its dark memories and darker anticipations, and share in the joy of her friends.

The dinner passed very merrily; Sir Charles Chevenix was full of jest and gay good humour. Colonel Brandrum told many an anecdote of Indian warfare, and vowed, that if it were not for his broken leg, which incapacitated him for active service, he would dress himself as the Ravenous Crow, and dance the war-dance in honour of Reginald's marriage. Lady Chevenix, now quite charmed with her son-in-law, was all urbanity and kindness, and though she did not comprehend Colonel Brandrum's character in the least, declared he was highly entertaining. Louisa, even pale, fragile Louisa, felt her gentle heart expand with joy at her brother's happiness; and Kate and Mary looked into each other's eyes, and whenever a sad thought returned, strove hard to banish it.

No excess was committed at the old baronet's table; and the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room as soon as Brandrum and Sir Charles had finished their allotted portion of claret. The fragrant coffee had been served, and Mary had been just besought to sing, when Dixon, the old butler, entered with two papers in his hand, which he presented to Sir Harry, saying, "Jenkins, the Barnet

coachman, Sir, brought these down from London, for your honour. There's great news in town, he says; and he thought you would like to see the *Gazette*."

Sir Harry took the papers and called for his spectacles, and when he had got them, he applied himself to the "Extraordinary Gazette," handing the newspaper which accompanied it to Colonel Brandrum, with the remark, "It is very droll, my dear colonel, that the appetite for this world's news increases when we are going out of it."

"True, Sir Harry, true," replied the colonel: "You and I have little else to amuse us. Those boys and girls find plenty;" and he applied himself to his paper.

Sir Harry, sitting under a lustre, read on for some minutes gravely, but with a look of satisfaction; but then he suddenly stopped, and raised his eyes towards Kate, when, almost at the same moment, Colonel Brandrum did the same. The latter, however, was much more accustomed to vent his thoughts aloud than the old baronet, and sometimes added an unnecessary expletive. On this occasion he did both, saying, "By — that's curious. I could have sworn it of him."

"Hush!" said Sir Harry. "I suppose, my dear Sir, our news is the same."

He spoke in a low voice, and Brandrum asked, "What is it?"

"The taking of Charleston by Sir Harry Clinton," said the old man, aloud, seeing that all eyes were turned upon

him; but at the same time he pointed with his finger to a passage in the *Gazette*.

Brandrum limped up to his chair and looked over him, when he saw, at the spot where the baronet's finger rested, the following words in the despatch: — "I cannot forbear expressing my high sense of the distinguished conduct of Lieutenant-Colonel Lutwich in all the operations which preceded and accompanied this event, both in leading and encouraging the men, and maintaining order and discipline under very trying circumstances. Though wounded in the arm and in the knee, he refused to retire from his command, and rendered me the most efficient and gallant assistance at every period of the operations."

"That's worth a general's commission," said Brandrum; "but that is not my news, Sir Harry. It is well nigh as good — though very horrible. There, you take that, it is more in your way; and give me this, which is more in mine; only the news of the fighting will make me long to be in the midst of it."

Mary's song had been stopped by all this; and now there was a general exclamation of "Pray, let us hear. Do not keep all the good news to yourselves."

"Charleston is taken by Sir Harry Clinton," repeated Sir Harry, looking at the newspaper which Brandrum had put into his hands at the same time; "Charleston is — Good Heaven! I had not heard of his death!"

"Nor I, either," said the colonel.

"Whose death?" asked Lady Chevenix.

"Sir Theodore Broughton's," replied Colonel Brandrum; and Kate fell at once on the floor, as if he had shot her.

Of course much confusion followed; and during the intervals of the attempts to recall poor Kate to herself, both ladies and gentlemen cried out upon the old officer for his indiscretion.

He bore it with great meekness and fortitude, however.

"Well, my dears," he said to Mary and Louisa, "I might have told her worse news for herself; though one cannot help regretting that a young fool like that should be cut off in the midst of a career of folly and wickedness, without time to review his life, and make atonement as far as possible. After all, I believe my way of telling her was best. It was once for all. But she is coming to herself again. You English girls are dear creatures, but you are very weak and moveable. If I had told one of the charming squaws such a piece of news, she would have got up and given the war-whoop."

Kate recovered speedily; and Mary and Louisa led her away to her own room. Sir Harry could not be content without following; and with all his own kindness of heart, and gentleness of manner, he soothed her tenderly and affectionately.

The emotions in the poor girl's bosom were very mixed, but they found relief in tears; and after Mary and Louisa

were gone, she replied to her old relation's expressions of anxiety, "I shall be better soon, my dear uncle. I cannot but feel that this is a relief; and yet I am half angry at myself for feeling it so. It is, indeed, terrible to think of this young man's death, and to know that he was but little prepared for it; but I do hope and trust that his rash pursuit—I might well call it persecution—of myself, has had no share in bringing about this fatal result."

"No, my dear child, no," replied Sir Harry, in a very sad tone; "I fear that there is a horrible history to be yet fully developed. All we know at present is, that a suspicion of poison exists, and that his guardian, Captain Donovan, has been apprehended."

He saw that Kate was very painfully affected, and he paused; but then added, "Without at all rejoicing at this unhappy man's death, my dear girl, we may reasonably thank God for relieving you from so dark and sad an engagement, without one step on your part, which even your too scrupulous heart might feel unworthy of you. You are now free, my Kate."

"To dedicate the rest of my life to you, my dear uncle," replied Kate, gazing at him with deep affection in her face.

"No, no — not quite so," said Sir Harry, with a smile; "you were formed for a happier fate, my love."

Kate shook her head somewhat sadly, and the old man went on to say, "Some one who may be worthy of your love may win it, and claim you of me."

She gazed upon the ground with tears in her eyes; and her lips murmured slowly, "No — no."

"Well, let us talk of brighter things," continued Sir Harry, anxious to give her every or any source of happiness. "I have some news of a far more pleasant and unmixed character for you, my love. In Sir Henry Clinton's last despatch regarding the campaign in America, the name of our friend Colonel Lutwich is mentioned with the very highest encomiums, not only of his gallantry and military skill, but of his whole conduct. I have lived many years, my child, and never yet, that I remember, have seen higher praise given to any soldier by his commanding officer."

It was the first time he had ever mentioned the name of Lutwich in her hearing, since she had dwelt under his roof; and she gazed in his face with an inquiring look. Sir Harry played for a moment with his seals, and lifting his eyes, he said, "Now, tell me, Kate, are you really resolved never to marry?"

Kate laid her hand upon his, and answered, "Never, if it is to take me from you; and never, never, without your consent,"

The old man threw his arms round her, and kissed her tenderly. "My own Kate!" he said: "now, tell me in your own dear, frank way do you love Lutwich?"

Kate kept her face upon his shoulder, and replied in a low voice, "I have loved him well enough to sacrifice

for him more than life — a whole life's happiness — I love him still well enough to do the same were it needful — but not to disobey you, or do ought, I trust, that is wrong."

"My consent shall never be refused to your happiness, my love," replied Sir Harry, pressing her to his heart. "We will think, my dear, that Lutwich, during his earlier years, was mad, that the delirium of youth's high blood was in many of his acts — we will trust that he is now himself again; and if he still proves himself so, he shall not want his reward, if I can give it."

"He never had any faults towards me!" replied Kate, "and when others persecuted, he nobly protected me. Oh! my dear uncle, I can never forget that night I passed in his cottage: the kindness, the gentlemanly courtesy, the respectful tenderness, the consideration for every feeling, which he displayed. Let others call him what they will: to me he was ever generous, noble, kind."

"Enough, enough, my Kate," said the old baronet. "you have said enough to decide my conduct. Now, Kate, wipe away those tears, and rejoin us soon."

I know not whether the reader will, or will not wish to hear more of the personages of this tale. But lest he should, and be disappointed if he do not, I will add a few words.

Sir Harry Jarvis was busy writing all the following morning; and his letter, which was a long one, went to America. About nine months after, Kate stood in that bright drawing-room with Lutwich's arms around her; nor did any consequence of his past life ever appear to trouble their repose. She had changed not his nature, but his conduct: her love had led him in the only road to true happiness; and he tried to make the present as happy to her, as she had rendered futurity to him.

Surely, no one will ask, if Reginald Lisle and Mary Chevenix were happy too.

Louisa made one of the most charming old maids that ever was seen; and if she had not spoiled a whole host of nephews and nieces, she would have been without a fault.

Doctor Gamble died in the Fleet prison.

Colonel Brandrum lived to tell his stories of Indian warfare long, and Sir Harry Jarvis saw extreme old age; for, in both their cases, high hearts and pure, had an embalming influence, which long preserved even the frail mortal body from the power of time.

There is one other to be spoken of, and alas! that the tale should close so sadly!

Captain Donovan, conscious of intended guilt, was betrayed into such doubtful conduct after the death of his ward, that suspicion was soon directed towards himself. He was tried by a judge who summed up harshly against

him, convicted upon evidence that would not in our days be held conclusive, and executed for a crime he had meditated, but did not commit, protesting his innocence to the last.

I am not fond of dwelling upon painful scenes. Of his fate, I have said enough, and the tale is done.

THE END.









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